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## Fremont, the Pathfinder; or, Bullet and Bayonet on Missouri Battlefields.

By Captain Mark Wilton.



Zagonyi's famous charge.

# FREMONT, THE PATHFINDER;

—OR,—

## Bullet and Bayonet on Missouri Battlefields.

BY CAPT. MARK WILTON.

### CHAPTER I. THE AMBUSH.

There was a bright flashing in the air, a steady tramp as of many feet, a clear, terse command, a body of men came marching through a rocky pass. The bright sun struck upon polished rifle-barrel and glistening bayonet, which sent out strange lights here and there, and in every point and feature the appearance of the men bespoke stern resolution.

It was a time of excitement and warlike alarm in Missouri, this memorable day of July, 1861; but the men to whom attention has been called were marching in leader, without uniforms. Dressed as ordinary citizens, they would have looked peaceful enough, had it not been for their array of weapons, their stern faces, and their military precision of movement.

"Silence in the ranks!" he commanded, sharply, as two of his men began hurling sarcastic badinage the length of a line. "No loud talking."

Without any warning a roar ran along the face of the rocks—a sound once heard not easily forgotten, for it was that of muskets—and Captain Barlow, instinctively looking around him, saw a shower of bullets whistled past his head, saw the ground plentifully covered with dead and dying of his gallant command.

Another moment, and the rocks seemed to be alive with men. High above their heads they were on both sides, and the bleak walls bristled with muskets.

The little band had marched into an ambush!

It was no time for tedious formalities. Barlow read the truth and planned the remedy. He saw his remaining men standing in consternation, but he knew their mettle and what he might expect.

"Fire!"

The terse command broke fiercely from his throat; his sword, glistening as a ray of the sun fell through a break in the rocky wall, pointed to the men above, and with such quickness the volley was obeyed.

Up went the weapons—the majority of them long rifles—and a terrible volley went hurtling through the air. No systematic discharge was that volley; each man had fired at his own fancy, but the effect was most terrible to the ambushers.

There was a commotion all along the rocks, and men were seen to clutch blindly at the spurs of stone, at each other, or at empty air.

Vain attempt for many of them, and a thrill ran through Barlow's nerves as several slipped over the edge, and, after whirling for a minute in space, fell on the soil of the battle.

Strange to say, the little band, though surprised, had struck back harder than they had been hit.

Barlow, however, was not done. He recognized the error when he thus attacked them. They were Confederates, and his command had been assailed because they had taken sides with the defenders of the Union.

"Up the rocks—charge!"

On the rocks the volley voice rang out sharply, and the gallant Missourians responded with a yell and a rush. The rocks arose steeply before them, but they were almost as skillful as chamois hunters. They struck the rocks and began to climb amid a scattering volley, Barlow leading the way, on one side and Dave Harney on the other.

"For the Union and Sigel—strike!" shouted Captain Max; and then he deftly dodged a blow from a clubbed musket and sent his sword home to the man who would have struck him.

The impetuosity of his men had carried them quickly up, and then the fight became a hand-to-hand struggle.

The sound of revolvers, the clashing of opposing steel, and the shouts of furious men made a din strange to the pass. The deadly enemies grappled and fought, aiming to kill or throw each from the rocks.

"For the Union and Sigel!"

Again and again the cry sounded on the air, and before those hard fighters the Confederates gave ground.

Barlow knew there was always found where the destruction was the greatest. A fine swordsman, he was battling with a blade wet with blood.

One thing he marked, even then. The Confederates seemed without a leader. No commanding voice arose to encourage or direct them; it seemed to be each man for himself.

Suddenly the confusion turned to alarm, and a body began to give ground rapidly. They were pressed, and then the whole body turned and fled in disorder.

Pursued for some distance, others fell by the way, but Barlow finally called off his men, all returned to the scene of the ambush.

A decisive victory had been won, but at a cost which threw a gloom over the whole command.

Thirteen of their eighty men lay dead in and beside the pass, and others were severely wounded. To offset this loss was the fact that nearly twice as many Confederates had fallen.

Now, who had been glancing about, saw something which at once held his attention.

Near the base of the rocks was a man in the uniform of a Confederate captain. He walked to his side, and looking down on the still, white face, understood why the enemy had been without a leader's voice.

"This is a sad and strange business," he said, aloud. "I do not understand why these men were sent to die in vain. Was it chance, or—or was there a traitor among those who knew we would to-day march to join Sigel? So cunning and systematic an ambush bespeaks careful study. Can it be our own men who betrayed us to our enemies?"

"It looks mightily like it," answered one of his men.

"Who could have done it?" Barlow sharply asked.

"Now you ask too much. Only a few beside our own number knew of our intentions."

"I believe they were known by one too many. Drayton, if I ever knew such to be a traitor, will fear the traitor limb from limb. Look on these dead men! They were our neighbors—almost our brothers. Did they fall through the treachery of some vile dog who betrayed us? I must and will know."

"It is a sad work."

"The saddest ever seen in Jasper county. And this is the Fourth of July! Ah! we have little occasion to rejoice."

Just then Dave Harney came up, and saluted his superior.

"The bodies are all cared for, cap'n," he said.

"Then let us get in motion once more," said Barlow, and he stayed this officer may have important papers on his person."

He bent over the Confederate captain and searched his pockets. In one he found a packet of folded documents which he put away for examination at a future time.

Then the little command formed into ranks, and moved on, leaving the Confederate dead where they had fallen.

Who, or where, was the traitor thus led by Max Barlow on that July day of 1861?

The civil war, which at that time was startling the people of the United States, was beginning to show its venom.

From all over the State the Southerners were gathering for the fray. They had resolved to secede from the Union, they had fired upon and captured Fort Sumter, and on all sides were seen and heard signs of the great struggle about to occur.

In Missouri all confusion. Some men were for the Union and others against it. Families were divided, and brothers in arms against each other, while those who would have remained neutral were in an unenviable position.

Companies and regiments, loyal and dis-

loyal, were forming in all places, and in the field were raised regiments composed of regulars and volunteers.

In June, General Nathaniel Lyon, that gallant Union leader, drove the Confederate forces of Price and Jackson from Booneville; but there at that time he faced south, and sought to form their own force, and that of Ben McCulloch into one united army which would rule that part of Missouri.

There, however, they found a new opponent, Colonel Franz Sigel, ever vigilant to guard the interests of the Union, did not fail to perceive the danger of the coalition of those who would tear down the old flag.

Consequently, although possessed of but a handful of men, compared with the numbers of the Confederate chiefs, he resolved to strike at least one of them before a junction was effected.

So, on this Fourth of July, Sigel was marching to attack Price, who was at Pool's Prairie, near Neosho, and the prospect of a battle grew great.

The blow did not fall where expected, however; for Price fled from his quarters to Elk Mills, some thirty miles to the south.

Then Sigel resolved to attack Jackson, who was further north, and his little army was accordingly headed for that point.

That evening, he encamped with his force on the banks of the Spang river, only waiting for a milder rest to push toward Lamar, and strike at Governor Jackson.

### CHAPTER II. UNDER FIRE.

Captain Max Barlow and his handful of men were marching to join Sigel, and render all possible aid in this crisis. They loved the Union, of which each and every one was a part, and they were willing to risk limb and life in the work of upholding the old flag.

All were from one neighborhood, all bound together by ties of friendship. Barlow was one of them, by birth and connection, but a superiority of mind had ever made him a leader from the day when he used to array his schoolmate friends on the prairie, and march to the whistling of Jim Otis, with crooked sticks for rifles.

Fifteen years had passed since that day. Barlow had become a man; and, in the summer of 1861, there was ample need for him to do more than play soldier.

When the boys and friends had joined hands, and resolved to march to the aid of Colonel Sigel, Max had been made captain by acclamation; and as a result of these preliminary movements, we find them that day before the battle on their way.

After the ambush and fight in the pass, they saw no more trouble, and a little after dark they reached the camp of Sigel.

Barlow was soon before the colonel. Formalities were quickly observed at that hour, and the Union leader, so embarrassed by a lack of proper aid, was glad enough to enlist all the loyal men who would come to his standard.

The two men were on the open field, and Barlow made known his wishes.

"Take your place in the camp somewhere, captain, and on the morrow march as you see fit. After the battle, if we survive, there will be changes made in our regiment, and I will give you all the chance I can. As I said a moment ago, I have heard the name of Barlow before."

"I am anxious to form a party of independent men," said Max.

"There will soon be material enough. Men are arousing every where."

"They need to, colonel."

"Indeed they do," soberly replied Sigel. "Look at the situation. Jackson, Price, and McCulloch are roving rough-shod and making life uncertain. They must be beaten off or our chances are desperate."

"You've saddled a big horse, kurnel."

"You need not be afraid," said Max, and they turned to see a man who did not seem at all troubled by the fact that he had interrupted officers of the army. In fact, he did not look like a man who would let anything worry him as a great degree.

He was a man of medium size, but compactly built, his form being rounded out by bone and muscle in a way to excite admiration. There, however, ended all his just claims to manhood. Clean shaven, he presented an appearance almost comical.

His hair and beard were of a yellow-red color, the latter sparse and tangled, and the former long and coarse, and his complexion was a ruddy, flame color.

Both Sigel and Barlow smiled at seeing this red-faced, red-haired recruit, and then



the former answered his unasked-for remark.

"So you think our chances desperate, my good man?"

"An ordinary man would never come out s' such a muss afore, but I know your timber, kumrel, an' I reckon you won't see a slaughter. Still, I tell ye Jackson is goin' ter lick us to-morrow. Why? Bekase his force is so much bigger than ours that we can't get any shair."

"And who are you, sir?"

"Sharpsht is my name, kumrel. Sometimes they call me Sharpsht, the scout, an' again the sharpshooter. It's all one to me."

"Sharpsht, the sharpshooter," laughed Barlow. "Not a bad name. Do you come from Sharpville, Sharpe county?"

"Now you are laughin' at me, cap'n. Don't do it. I didn't ter blame fur my name."

"What are the numbers of the enemy?"

Sigel asked, abruptly.

"I don't know, kumrel; but if you want ter find out, you had better do it arly to-morrow. Ben McCulloch an' Price will be around here before another sundown, an' then whar would we be?"

"In our boots, dead or alive?" said Barlow, with a reckless laugh.

There was a pause, with each man having claimed so odd a name some what further; but, as he did not seem to possess any actual information, finally set him down as a croaker, and, walking away, left him to himself.

The next day, with further events of importance, but, on the following morning, the little army was early astir.

An advance was begun as soon as possible, and the devoted band moved on.

As they counted but fifteen hundred men, but their strength was greatly increased by two batteries of artillery, each containing four pieces.

Moving nearly northward, the Unionists were engaged in sighting their opponents.

Barlow's command had fallen into line near Major Bischoff's cannon, for many of the men seemed attracted to the pieces; but, as he doubted riflemen began to be seen in advance, they rushed ahead and acted as a skirmish line.

The horsemen before referred to did not seem inclined to do much fighting.

They skirted about in the dashing manner peculiar to mounted men, in all the while kept at a safe distance from the Union files.

"That are the critters drivin' 'em!" demanded one of the men.

"In my opinion, they are merely watching me," replied Barlow. "You see they give ground as fast as we advance, and, in this way, they will soon know just what our strength is."

"That don't seem right."

"It ain't right, an' I want to know why you allow it. Why don't you drop the miserable creetur?"

Barlow turned to see Sharpsht.

"Ah! are you here?"

"Whar else should I be?"

"I don't know why you should be in my command," said Max, a little sharply.

"Lord! I ain't here fur any harm. You say them creeturs can't be hit from hyar, do you?"

"Possibly they might if we were to halt for that purpose."

"Nonsense! Let me show you a point or two."

As he spoke, the sharpshooter threw up his long rifle and took aim for a moment.

Instantly that the barrel did not tremble in the least, and admired his nerve, but he felt more pleased when, following the crack of the piece, one of the horsemen reeled in his saddle, and then went down helter-skelter.

"Told you so," said Sharpsht, with a chuckle. "Lord! it ain't much o' a trick ter throw lead. Try your hand, cap'n, will you?"

"Not now, my good man. May be we will get at those fellows in force by and by."

The scout relaxed while in motion, but, with his gaze fixed on the enemy, seemed deeply thoughtful.

"Cap'n," he finally said, "if you will take twenty men an' follow my lead, I'll show them fellers a trick they can't swaller without chokin'."

"What's the trick?"

"We are movin' uncommon slow, now; what is to hinder our rummin' around to their rear an' layin' an ambush for them?"

"It be done?"

"Why?"

"I for one, don't know the country well enough."

"I do; I know every foot of it. What

say, cap'n, shall I lead your fellers ter victory?"

Sharpsht spoke eagerly, and for a moment Barlow remembered that he was a stranger, and doubted the wisdom of trusting him.

Just then, however, they reached the spot where lay the sharpshooter's victim, and that seemed to settle the question of his good faith.

"I will consult Colonel Sigel," said Barlow.

He did as he said, received the required permission, and then twenty of his men detached themselves from the others so cunningly that the Confederate scouts did not suspect the ruse.

Sharpsht led the way, and they were soon on the left flank of the Union force. Still, on they went. The ground was hilly and broken, and the guide led the way where they were for the most part screened by trees and high land.

Now and then they saw the horsemen off at a distance, but their own movements seemed unwatched.

Going three rods to every one traveled by the army, they were soon well in advance, and Sharpsht began to think of closing in and springing his trap on the Confederates.

He was a prisoner captive, and that gives a boss apiece," he added.

"Don't cook your game until it's caught," cautioned Barlow, who was not wholly at his ease.

"We're goin' ter have it," said the scout, confidently.

Just then, a cry arose from the men at the rear, and Barlow wheeled to see a starting sign.

From around the head of a hill, a body of cavalry had suddenly swept, all clad in Confederate gray, and armed to the teeth, and as they dashed straight toward the Union line, there was an ominous clanking of scabbars.

Barlow saw the danger and prepared to meet it. The enemy were two to their one, and when it comes to close quarters, cavalry have a vast superiority over foot soldiers.

These men were their deadly enemies, and must be dealt with accordingly, while the first blow always tells.

"It be it's do or die!" he said, quickly, and in the fashion familiar to them in Indian warfare. "All together—fire!"

It was not so elaborate an order as the stereotyped one of military form, but almost as man the brave fellows aimed and fired.

Destruction followed the discharge, and men swayed blindly in their saddles, and then fell heavily to the ground.

Ten Confederates would ride no more, but they still outnumbered the Unionists, and had the advantage of being mounted.

Seeing that they were not checked in the least, Barlow was for a moment at fault. His force were armed with rifles which, without bayonets, and the enemy must be met at a disadvantage.

## CHAPTER III.

### HARD FIGHTING.

It was a critical moment, for the Confederates were near at hand and coming at a gallop, their sabers glistening in the air, but Sharpsht did not seem to be long at fault.

He sprang to the head of the column and waved a long bowie-knife above his head.

"Meet 'em on your own ground an' on your own terms. Hurrah fur Sigel an' the old flag!"

His words and example thrilled the men, and they cheered in the face of the danger. Barlow aroused, and became the stern warrior in a moment.

"Revolvers and bowies!" he shouted. "Empty every saddle you can before they close, and then use the steel. Every man for himself!"

There was no time to say more. Already the Confederates were but a few yards away, and their horses covered a great strip of ground at every leap.

Out came the smaller weapons of the Unionists. All their lives had been passed in desultory fighting with the Indians, and when the closing order from Barlow reached their ears they knew how to act.

There was a sudden cracking along their whole front as their revolvers began to play, and at that distance they were not men to miss their mark. They fired, and other Confederates went down from their midst, and other wild-eyed horses went bounding away riderless.

Then came the shock of the assault, and

only those who have felt such a thing can understand it.

To a foot soldier, especially if he has no bayonet, a horse and rider loom up tremendously.

He sees the horse, his eyes wild and flashing, his feet dashing up the earth in little, spiteful jets, and above him towers the rider, saber in hand.

The picture is a startling one, we say, and so all the more glory to those loyal sons of Missouri for the way in which they met it.

Like bloodhounds they sprung forward to meet the charge. Their strong hands grasped the reins of the horses and stayed them in their course; and then came the tug of war.

The sabers of the cavaliers flashed brighter than ever as they were swung aloft, and then down they came with a sweep meant for loyal horse and rider.

Some of them found their victims. Two or three brave men sunk to the ground tremulously gashed, but the majority dodged the stroke, and then their revolvers began to crack again.

Look at Captain Barlow! His powerful hand has grasped the bride-rein of a black horse.

The animal bounds furiously under his hold, and almost lifts him from his feet. At the same moment the rider strikes, Barlow ducks his head, and the sabre whistles through the empty air.

Then, still holding the struggling horse with his hands, he thrusts his revolver past the neck and above the shoulder of the animal.

Again the sabre goes up, but it is too late. A little puff of smoke, a sharp crack, and the blood gushes out over the gray coat of the trooper.

He throws up his hands, reels and falls from his saddle.

Look at the scout.

He is fighting with his clubbed rifle. No rider seems able to reach him, but the rifle is always busy, and where it falls, it falls to hurt.

The scene is wild and impressive, but it is soon over. The contestants separate, as though mutually tired of the fray, and what are left of the troopers gallop away in headlong haste.

One half of their number stay on the field, dead or dying; the destruction has been great.

Fur better have the Unionists fared, but they do not care to pursue their advantage. Five of their own number are down, and others have hard knocks to attract their attention.

Stained by smoke and blood they look grimly at each other, silent thus far, but the irrepressible Sharpsht finds his tongue very soon.

"Hurrah!" he cried, tossing up his old cap. "Told you thar was fight in your critters, Cap'n Barlow. They've did it, an' they kin do it ag'in."

"We have lost five men," said Barlow, sadly.

"An' they hev lost four times five. It's thar w'ar. But, cap'n, I reckon our lee is knocker in the eye. We can't lay no trap fur them cavalry, fur they know we are on the hoof."

"It looks to me as though we have rum into a trap ourselfes," said the captain, looking at his fallen men.

"Who got the wust on't? I reckon them critters won't care to tackle us ag'in."

I am inclined to think that if we don't get back arly to-morrow mornin', we will be attacked by a force we can't defy. Our game is up, at anyrate. We will fall back and avoid losin' more men."

They slowly retraced their steps, waiting for Sigel and his braves to join them.

Sharpsht had grown strangely silent. Suddenly he aroused and went to Barlow's side.

"You spoke about our rummin' inter a trap, cap'n. Do you s'pose thar was treachery any whar?"

"What makes you ask?"

"Bek'ase we moved mighty quiet an' sly, an' it seems odd that them troopers, so scattered a little before, should so quickly get together an' hit us as they did."

Barlow looked thoughtfully at the sharpshooter. He had a keen, intelligent face, and looked like one able to penetrate plots and plans.

Barlow remembered, too, his suspicious regard to the ambush in the pass, and one great question arose in his mind.

Was this man to be trusted? He had not made his answer when those of his own command who had remained

with the army, began to arrive, and the smaller detachment fell into line.

"That lack, cap'n?" said Sam Stiles.

"We return minus the brass," said Barlow, "let that be my answer," said Barlow, moodily.

They went on, driving the mounted Confederates before them.

The latter made no stand, and seemed content to wait.

On Wet Creek Sigel's army.

Dry Fork Creek was reached and passed; but, three miles further on, Sharpshot, who had pressed well to the front, fell back in some haste.

He came to say that he had found the enemy, and that they were halted, and awaiting the Unionists on a rise of ground a little beyond.

Sigel stayed the advance of his army, and the scout, with others of his craft, were sent out to reconnoiter.

When they returned, it was to report that Jackson's force greatly outnumbered theirs, and that he was well provided with cavalry.

"How about artillery?" Sigel asked.

"I can answer that," said Sharpshot, quickly. "There's that they are weak. They have only a few old pieces, and what they have ain't o' much use. They are loaded with trace-chains, bits o' old iron an' the like."

"Then we will make our cannon do the work," Major Bischoff, got your guns into position and get them ready."

The order was executed promptly, and the deep boom of the guns sounded along the front.

The return fire was weak, and it was soon seen that Sharpshot had spoken truly in regard to the enemy's artillery.

"Who is this man?" Sigel asked of Barlow, as the sharpshooter flapped his arms, and began crowing, which would have put a farmyard rooster to shame.

"I never saw him until he interrupted us at the camp last night, as you will remember, colonel."

He seems well informed, and all he has told me has been proven true. It almost seems like an empty form to send my own scouts to verify what he tells me, but it will not do to trust a stranger too far."

For three hours the work of the Union artillery was continued.

Bischoff stood grimly at his post and dispatched shot after shot, some of which seemed effective, and, as at the start, the return was weak.

With his small force he dared not make an advance, but there seemed to be nothing to prevent the Confederates from doing so.

This fact led the sagacious colonel to believe that the Union force was gaining a covert advantage, and scouts were sent out to reconnoiter carefully.

The result proved the correctness of his judgment. It was found that the Confederates, under Bains, were moving forward along both flanks of the Unionists, and pushing south.

As this would never do, with Sigel's baggage-train at Dry Fork Creek in danger, the order was given for the retreat, and the movement began, though all was in accordance with military rules and good order.

When the Confederates saw them go they promptly followed. Before, they had feared bischoff's guns, but the retreat looked like a panic to them, and they prepared to scoop the little army into their net.

It was easier to wish than to do. Sigel was still the brave soldier, and in perfect order the five hundred men, and the gray troopers, the back track; and when the men left by Jackson pressed too sharply, the hints of the cannon were too pointed to be disregarded.

As they neared Dry Fork Creek, Sharpshot, who had been with an air of one who has made a discovery.

"We're gon' ter have a brush over yonder," he said.

"Where?"

"At the creek. Them troopers have got around to our rear, and are waiting at the creek. You know that place—the road is narrower an' right through the bluffs. The Confeds know it, an' that they are waitin' ter catch a trap."

It was important news, and Sigel was not slow to benefit by it.

As they reached the creek, his guns were brought round to the front, facing the bluffs, and as they saw the gray troopers drawn up to receive them, the cannon were turned upon them.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Sharpshot; "that teaches them. Oh, they are jewels, them brimstone-burnin' critters."

He referred to the annals; and, indeed,

they were making it warm for the cavalry; but they showed a given purpose to hold their post and guard the road.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### A STARTLING DISCOVERY

Colonel Sigel's quick eyes saw that one more thing was needed. He turned, and gave a few quick, but calm orders. The result was soon seen.

Near the first bluff of the creek gathered a body of his infantry, with Captain Barlow and the rest of the men among them. This had been at the captain's own request.

All was ready along the line. The Unionists stood in position, their weapons firmly grasped, and a determined gleam in their eyes.

With a grand sweep they dashed forward, breaking from cover and along the road. The Confederate cavalry saw what was coming, but they had no way of averting the blow. None of their own wretched cannon were near, while, as the Unionists dashed down the slope and across the bed of the creek, Bischoff sent shot after shot over their heads.

The southern bluff was reached by the eager boys in blue, and the boys without blue who had loyal hearts. Then they went impetuously.

Before that sight the cavalry wavered. The Unionists played on their precious hand, and the infantry bade fair to sweep them from existence.

The hurricane struck. The Confederates were brave, and they tried to hold the pass, but the Unionists were resistless. The enemy wavered, struck, broke, and then turned and fled, leaving some of their men dead on the disputed ground.

Then the army proper and the guns came forward, and their faces were turned toward Carthage.

Sigel could no longer doubt that he was menaced by a foe too strong to be fought with a reasonable chance of success. His scouts agreed that Jackson had three men or more to every Unionist, and to face his army, liable, even probable as they were, to soon be reinforced by Price and McClintock, would be madness.

Then Sigel turned, with the Confederates hanging on their rear and flanks, and with numerous skirmishes to enliven the occasion, the loyal troops went on in an orderly manner as far as Carthage.

Then Sigel turned to retreat, but rest was fraught with danger, so he was to be seen to Sarcoxie, and before that place was reached the pursuit was abandoned.

On the whole, the expedition had been successful. The Union troops had faced and defeated an enemy vastly their superior in numbers, and, while they lost but thirteen men killed, the Confederates admitted over three times that number on the list, besides a large number wounded.

It was not until Sarcoxie was reached that Barlow remembered the papers he had taken from the pocket of the dead officer in the pass. From the time he left the place of action, he had been very busy, and, not thinking of them, they had slipped from his interest, the fact that he held the documents had slipped his mind.

At the latter town, however, he sat down to read them in the presence of several of his men.

Five letters were first, all without interest, and then came two or three official orders, of no value; but last came a soiled paper, which Barlow read with a variety of emotions. At first he was angry, then doubtful, and, lastly, filled with consternation.

This was what he read in the course, bold and scholarly handwriting on the paper:

"B—W—, march on M. of the pass, to join S—, probably never sent by me or either of us. The route is by way of the pass, fourth, and strike an important blow at the C. S. A."

"Edgar Peterson."

It was a document which told a good deal. Coupled with the fact that Barlow's men had marched on the afternoon of the fourth, eighty in number, and, by way of the pass, and that they had been ambushed by men armed with rifles, it left no doubt but that the letter referred to them.

So far, all was clear, and so, too, was the fact that some one had betrayed their plans to the Confederates and sought their destruction.

The plot had only failed because the gallant band showed themselves men of uncommon mettle.

But who had betrayed them? It seemed a useless question, for at the end of the letter

was a name plainly written. It might have been an assumed one, but it was not.

Captain Barlow knew "Edgar Peterson" well, but it was this fact which sent the blood from his face to give place to a look of unutterable horror.

One moment he hesitated, and then a sudden impulse assailed him.

"I will have it!"

Even so, the thought entered his mind, a voice spoke quickly at the captain's elbow.

"Aha! so that is the name of the traitor!"

Barlow wheeled around like a tiger to see Sam Stiles and another man. They had read over his shoulder.

"Dogs!" he cried, furiously, "how dare you play the spy on my actions?"

The men stood dumfounded. They were old John Dors of the captain, and his remarkable outburst almost amused them. Other men drew near, and Stiles apologetically replied:

"We meant no harm, cap'n."

"Then why were you reading private papers?"

Barlow realized that he was making a serious mistake, and paused abruptly.

"I am sorry if I did wrong," said Stiles, meekly.

"What did you say about finding out the traitor? Does that paper explain anything?" asked another man, who had not forgotten how Barlow put them away for future ignominy.

"Yes," does," cried Stiles' companion. "It is the letter writ by the man who betrayed us, and caused the death of our brave feller in the pass. His name is at the bottom, and his name is Ed Peterson!"

The man spoke indignantly, and a murmur of like character ran along the line. All there knew Ed Peterson, and, for reasons of their own, they accepted the truth of what John Dors had told them.

"It may be a forgery," cried Max Barlow, like a man catching at a straw.

"It is in Ed's writing; I'll swear to that."

"He would not be so base."

"And why? He ain't the biggest drunkard in Jasper county. Ain't he a miserable, shiftless vagabond?"

"He may have been that, though he has promised to reform now; but he would never become a murderer of his own friends and neighbors."

Barlow spoke with warmth, but Sam Stiles took up the other side with a gloomy shake of his head.

"I don't blame you fer wantin' it otherwise; but look at the evidence. Ed knew all our plans, an' this letter tells them in his own writin'."

"Yes; and why did he refuse to come with us?" cried still another man. "He professed loyalty to the Union, and swore never to touch another drop of liquor; but he wa'n't at all rabid to march out and face the danger."

"He always was a sneak."

"And now he's a traitor and murderer."

"A drunkard can't be trusted, anyhow."

These and similar cries arose about poor Barlow, who had strong reasons for wishing the different things of Ed Peterson; but, though his mind seemed on the verge of insanity, and their looks were dark, he faced them calmly.

"Friends and fellow soldiers," he said, "I beseech you be slow in condemning him utterly. I acknowledge that his past life has been full of mistakes, but he has never taken a solemn oath never again to touch liquor, and I believe he will keep that now. I honestly think, too, that his heart is all for the Union. Men, I have been of good courage of late, for I thought he was sure to reform. I am so sure of it now, that I ask you to suspend your judgment until we investigate."

The majority of the men were affected by this appeal. Their anger had arisen hot and blindly against Edgar Peterson, as the betrayer of their brave friends who fell in the pass, but Barlow's influence was still strong. Little opposition was made to his will; many of the men went quietly back to their places, but there were those who grumbled, and still thought the fatal letter a wall of evidence which nothing could demolish.

And this was Edgar Peterson.

A resident of their own township, and a man of about Barlow's own age; a man brave in his way, and as good a shot as could easily be found in Missouri. In their former border wars he had often done good service, while the fact that he was the son of the family was proved when an elder brother went with Colonel John C. Fremont in his memorable march through the heart of the continent as an explorer.



This brother, however, had died in 1860. Edgar, with all his gifts of nature, had one fault which had made him despised by many, and pitied by those who would have been his friends.

He had fallen into the habit of reckless drinking when a mere boy, and during the last seven years his life had been one terrible to contemplate. Strong liquor was his master, and as is always the case, it was a mercies only. Poor Edgar went down like a rapidly. Going from bad to worse, he lost all control over himself, and thought of nothing except to pour the demoralizing fluid down his throat.

True, he had periods of struggling against his master, but they always ended in the same way.

Even the women and children came to look with indifference at the sight of Ed Peterson staggering through the streets, or lying, completely intoxicated, wherever he chanced to fall.

Of late there had been a change, and Barlow hoped it would last. He had hoped it with all the earnestness of his nature.

Near the village lived two sisters whose names were Olive and Lena Somers. Barlow had long been on terms of intimacy with them, and for a year Olive had been his betrothed.

Of late, Edgar Peterson had been much to the house.

People saw it, and wondered that these two girls, against whom not a whisper of reproach had ever been raised, should thus become the drunkard of the town.

Blissful as people usually are, even when they think they know all, they did not suspect that Lena had turned her attention to saving Edgar; they did not suspect that she had been drinking, and that between him and Lena had sprung up an intimacy which was worship on his part, and—well, we will see how it was with her.

#### CHAPTER V.

##### THE MOB.

The small but beautiful house of Abram Somers looked peaceful and inviting enough to attract an only, as it nestled near the road with a field and wood at the rear; and the picture was made doubly inviting as fair-faced Lena moved about to perform the sad duties of the evening.

Supper had been eaten, Abram and his elder daughter had gone to the village, and Lena was left alone for the time.

We have said that she was fair-faced. Descriptions are full of reading, but let us pause to say that this girl with her small form, golden hair, blue eyes, and sweet but intelligent face made a rare picture of innocence.

People who knew her always had good words for the younger daughter of Abram Somers.

They knew her to be pure, tender-hearted, earnest and self-sacrificing at all times. This they knew, but even those who had watched her grow from childhood did not suspect the depth, strength and devotion of her woman's heart.

A step sounded at the door as she was putting the finishing touch to her work, and she turned quickly.

Then a slight flush arose to her face.

"Edgar!" she said, softly.

"Yes, Lena, it is I."

And then the man who had entered, moved forward a step and took the hand she extended to him.

It was indeed Edgar Peterson, the man about whom the interest of our story now centers.

He did not look like a man of depravity. Young, gifted by nature with a fine face and form, he would have been called handsome by any one, though there were some traces of dissipation still visible on his countenance.

"Yes, it is I," he headed, smiling. "I've come back to you in my right mind, and I can say more. Not a drop of liquor have I touched since I went away. Lena, those dark days are past. Your love has drawn me back from the awful gulf where I trod so long, and, by the help of Heaven, I will henceforth be a man!"

His face was aflame and his face was full of a resolution and glory which went straight to her heart.

"I am so glad, Edgar!"

Simple words, but as she crept to his arms there was a peace and happiness between them which passes description.

They sat down together on the old lounge, and their words soon became more practical.

"Have you heard the news from the front?" he asked.

"They tell me Sigel fought the enemy bravely, and then drew back his army through a force many times his own number."

"So he did, all honor to him and his brave men, but you should have seen our colonel. Brave Sigel! he is a king among men and I felt like kneeling at his feet."

"You were there, Edgar?"

"Yes, I was with the army, fighting as best I could."

"With Max Barlow's men?"

"No. I wished to hold to my resolution to prove my name before I asked to fight among my neighbors, and—no, a sight did they gain of the drunkard—"

"Edgar!"

"Pardon me, Lena, the word slipped out unthought. No, they did not see me, but I was there."

"Where is the army now?"

"At Springfield. We retreated through Carthage, Sarcoxie and Mount Vernon to Springfield. There Sigel hopes to soon be joined by General Lyon, and the united bodies will oppose Price, McCulloch and Jackson."

"There will be hard fighting," sighed Lena.

"So there will; but, at all costs, the Union must be preserved."

An hour passed, and still the two sat in conversation.

Despite the dark war-clouds, Lena was very happy.

Peterson looked so noble and manly since he had thrown off the millstone of intemperance from his neck that sunshine seemed to shine on his face.

She was risking much in trusting him so fully, for his reformation was but just begun, but she had all of a woman's confidence in the man she loved.

In the midst of their conversation came a sharp knocking at the door.

They started from their lovers' position, but neither had a thought of trouble, and Lena turned toward the entrance with a composure which died away all too soon.

She opened the door.

Before her were a score of men, all armed, and with a fierceness in their manner which startled her. She recognized them as people of the village, and Sam Stiles was at their head.

"Good-evenin!" said the latter, abruptly.

"Is Ed Peterson hyar?"

The question came so quickly and sharply that Lena changed color in perceptible instant; but Edgar pushed forward before she could answer.

"Yes, Sam, I am here," he said, quietly.

"Didn't, for we are erter you," said Stiles.

"After me? And what is wanted?"

The speaker said that every face bore a scowl, but in those days of warfare that was no strange thing.

He did not for a moment suspect that anything was wrong.

Stiles shifted his gaze away so that he would not meet Lena's close regard.

He saw that she was frightened, and he had enough manhood to respect her feelings.

"The boys are goin' to hold a war-meeting, an' we want everybody there. Max Barlow said he reckoned you was hyar, so we come to ask you ter go with us."

"Lena was hyar, but he did like one accustomed to the business."

"Of course I will go. Wait until I get my rifle and I am with you."

Edgar stepped back into the house, and then returned with his arm.

"Oh, Edgar!" she said, nervously, "I fear—I fear—"

"What?" he asked, in surprise.

"I fear some one mean you harm. Did you see how they scowled at you? Sam Stiles was never your friend, and I fear he has not told the truth now."

Indeed Lena, you are mistaken. Their scowls were only the signs of the war, and though Sam and I have never been friends, this crisis erases all little troubles of the past. Besides, he is one of Barlow's men."

"Still, I wish you would not go. I shall not feel easy for I cannot rid myself of the impression that they mean you harm. Remain here, Edgar, and only go to their meeting when you have Max Barlow to assist you."

It was a woman's appeal, based on a woman's fears, but Edgar only kissed her trembling lips.

Surely, his old friends and neighbors could mean him no harm.

He and they had joined hands to aid in

preserving the Union, and now they were as brothers.

All this he explained, holding her hand, and when she saw how anxious he was to leave her in good spirits, she managed to smile faintly at his earnestness.

He said good-by and they parted.

He had said that he would see her again that evening, but the future was concealed from their vision.

The men were impatiently awaiting him. He joined them, rifle in hand, fell into line beside Stiles, and away went the whole body toward the village.

Stiles began to talk about the recent fighting, but so much had he secured from at ease, and his remarks were ill-connected.

He glanced queerly at his companions, and they, in return, scowled the more, and kept close to him and Edgar Peterson.

Passing around to the rear of the house, they entered the wood before mentioned and hurried in the direction of the village, but half way through the wood, the glances among the men became more frequent.

Suddenly, Stiles coughed slightly.

He had uttered a planned signal, and at the word one of the men behind Peterson suddenly snatched his rifle from his grasp, while, at the same time, he came forward by the arms, and he stood a prisoner.

Disarmed and in the trap, he stood quietly, but looked at them in utter amazement.

"What does this mean?" he asked.

"So you don't know?" started Stiles, his manner at once changing. "So you are as innocent as a baby? Oh! no; you can't guess what it means, can you? You ain't dead, not yet, hevy, hevy? You are an angel in disguise!"

The man poured out his bitter sarcasm with a venom which dumfounded Edgar, but he still stood quietly and proved his nerve by a steady and calm gaze.

"I am wholly at fault. If this is a joke, count me in to carry it on; I don't like to spoil any man's pleasure. But, boys, if you are thinking me a criminal of any kind, I am without a sin to my crime."

"How about the men who fell in the pass?"

"I have heard of that tragedy, but I was not there."

"Of course you want! Of course you wouldn't risk your own precious neck! But, Ed Peterson, you were not so careful of the men who had been your neighbors."

"I am as good as dead."

"Come into the light; come inter a blaze that shall show you up as you are. Read that, will you?"

The prisoner's hands were still held tightly, but Stiles thrust an open paper before his eyes, and he could read easily enough. It did read, and the words almost paralyzed him.

The note was the one read by Max Barlow in the camp at Sarcoxie; the one purporting to be from Edgar Peterson, to some one who had afterward laid the ambush for the Unionists, acting on the information contained in the note.

Edgar read; and, as he finished, a look of horror was on his face; but it quickly gave place to indignation.

"Want base forgery is this?" he demanded.

"Who dares to sign my name to such an infamous letter?"

"It is in your writing."

"Still it is a forgery. Sam Stiles. Abe Taylor—what do you know of the matter? Are you sold?"

"That letter, Ed, was found on the body of the man who commanded the ambushers at the pass," said Abe Taylor, gravely.

Then the whole business flashed upon Peterson. The Barlow squads had been ambushed by means of information contained in that note, and not only was it signed by his name, but it was in a handwriting so like his own that it might have gone safely through a court of law.

All this he saw, and plain it was, too, that deadly passions and danger for him had sprung from the base and cruel forgery.

"Men," he cried, in a clear voice, "I do not wonder that you look at me darkly, but I swear by all I hold sacred that I never saw that paper until to-night."

#### CHAPTER VI.

##### KEELER'S BAND.

A hoarse murmur arose from the crowd, and then excited exclamations followed which were none too choice in their wording.

"But how do you explain it?" asked Abe Taylor, who seemed to be the coolest man there.

"Simply by saying that it is a forgery. My hand never penned those words, nor do I know their author. I swear it. How it was done, I cannot guess, but I do see in this that I have an enemy somewhere, who purposely imitated my writing and signed my name to these anonymous letters, and caused me to overstep myself in one particular. You see that the wording of the note is somewhat vague, while the identity of the man addressed is concealed under a mask. Who is 'A. S. T.' for one, cannot imagine. But, friends, amid all this vagueness, one name stands out plain and clear—my own."

"What of that?" snarled Stiles.  
 "Simply this: The forger there gives himself away. If there had been no trick in the matter, the name would be hidden like the remainder of the note; it would be vague, like the name of the man addressed. There, I say, the forger betrays his plot. My name was written there, so distinctly, simply for the purpose of ruining me."

He had made a strong argument, and, coupled with his bold and persuasive address, it touched some of the men; but Stiles held them back by an unbelieved retort, and again the murmur welled among the men.

"You can't lie out of it; your own writing betrays you," said Stiles, savagely. "Boys, vote my verdict!"

"Guilty!"

"Kill the traitor!"

"Hang him!"

These shouts arose fiercely, but half the men shut their eyes and cried:

"They were all of Barlow's command; they intended to do what was right, and though Peterson's past was against him, and the evidence in the present case terribly strong, Alton was not a traitor; his voice in favor of delay and an investigation."

He was too late, however. At the last words from the more rabid of the crowd, they rushed upon the prisoner, and Alton was slain before he could utter a word. Murder danced in their faces, and their aspect was terrible.

Edgar saw his peril, and was not disposed to meet it tamely.

He hung on to the strongest arms and of his foes fell at dawn.

His eyes were full of battle-fire, and, with anything like a chance, he would have cleared a way through them.

Unexpectedly, however, the rope was about his neck, and when a sudden jerk cast him to the ground, his enemies piled upon him like eurs upon a hampered panther.

After that, the end was soon reached. Despite his struggles, he was soon subdued, and with his hands bound behind his back and the rope around his neck, he was dragged under a spreading tree.

Abe Taylor tried to interfere, but they pushed him back, and the loose end of the rope was cast over the lower branch of the tree.

Edgar had ceased to struggle. He believed that his end was near, but not a sign of craven fear was visible.

Proud and erect, though on a conqueror's throne, he stood among his destroyers, and looked them calmly in the face.

He could die, if need be, but not as a coward.

"At present, as he thought of Lena, his gaze wavered, but the emotion was soon past."

"Up with him!"

The command came from Sam Stiles, and as the Unionists all at once obeyed. They pulled sharply, Edgar was lifted clear of the ground, and then hung dangling and struggling, a terrible sight, in mid-air.

"Tie the rope to yonder sapling!"

Stiles spoke with that trace of feeling, and the order was obeyed.

Then all stepped back to view the awful scene before them—the lawless hurrying of a human soul before its Maker.

There was a crashing in the bushes, a shout of command, and as they turned to see the cause, a band of horsemen in Confederate gray swept into sight, their naked sabers flashing as the last gleam of the descending sun fell on the polished blades.

"Guerrillas!"

"Keeler's band!"

"The Jasper Centaurs!"

Such were the exclamations that fell from the dismayed Unionists—dismayed, for they were outnumbered, and they knew the way of Keeler's band all too well.

A detachment of irregular soldiers—plundered and disarmed—had been formed from the lowest of the men of their own and surrounding towns, and led by one Keeler, of

the vicinity, they had for some time been scouring the country, with saber and torch as their tools of trade.

Wearing Confederate gray, and professing to be fighting for the Southern cause, they had used no discrimination in their work, but had killed and captured with utter disregard of political inclinations.

Seeing this dreaded band, the Unionists stood not upon the manner of their going, but took to their heels in flight.

Through the bushes went each and every man, fleeing for dear life, and in their rear chased the guerrillas.

Under the swaying figure of poor Peterson went Keeler's band, giving heed only to the fugitives; and the pursuit became warm.

The Unionists aimed to reach the village, and the enemy to prevent them, but in the bushes the footmen had the advantage over the horses, and they finally broke cover with a hundred yards advantage.

Before them lay a level field, and beyond that, the village; and when the Jasper Centaurs broke from the trees a race for life began.

The fugitives ran as they had never run before, and at the very front sped Sam Stiles, a look of terror in his face. Close behind them sped the guerrillas, yelling like Indians, and swinging their sabers.

Heed not the one-shot cracks of their horses, the turf went spinning into the air in spiteful jets, and every minute saw the intervening space decreased.

Luckily, the field was not wide enough to run in, and the village houses seemed to stretch out their welcoming arms, the fugitives cleared the open space, and darted here and there among the houses, where they once more had the advantage.

Heed not the danger menaced the town. Keeler's band was in the saddle, and up to that day no checks had ever been dealt them when they were on their raids. Now, they were going straight for the heart of the town, and that meant the old story of the saber and torch.

Faster than the stride of their horses, had gone the tidings of their coming. Max Barlow, home for a little while with his men, to make time for the village before formally joining Sigel's army, heard the news and rushed out with the others to see and do, if anything could be done.

Confusion reigned everywhere; for all Unionists were bound on the Jasper Centaurs, but Max Barlow's courage arose equal to the occasion.

He shouted to his men, and they fell into line.

"Stand firm, all!" he said. "Remember we fight for our homes and women, and for precious lives. Let us give Keeler a lesson he will not soon forget."

A cheer arose from his followers, and the bravest of the women waved their handkerchiefs.

Max acted quickly but systematically. Among the others, were a score of old men and boys whose hearts were stouter than their bodies.

These he directed to take cover behind the houses; and, at the proper moment, to pour in their shots thick and fast.

With his own immediate command he intended to fight in a different way. If the guerrillas were to enter the town, more or less destruction must follow. They must be stayed at the first, if possible.

Acting on this idea, Barlow hurried his men to the eastern side of the village. Commanding the guerrillas, they saw the Jasper Centaurs close at hand.

Barlow gave a few rapid orders and the reception committee was ready.

On came the horsemen with wild yells, and their hoofs beat soot-rang on the hard soil of the street.

They saw the Unionists, but they saw, too, that the force was inferior in point of numbers to their own, and they yelled again as they imagined how they would sweep them away.

Barlow glanced at his men. They were standing like rocks; no fear that they would fall him.

"Fire!"

His command rang out clearly, and like an echo came the flash and report of the Union weapons.

It was a destructive volley for the guerrillas, and the riders found their horses cut short by death, and many a horse galloped on without a master as the leaden hail sped on its way.

Despite this, the advance was not stayed. Still the Jasper Centaurs toward their foes, their sabers raised on high, and it looked as though they would yet win the day.

Barlow thought differently. Since his march with Sigel, he had succeeded in getting good markets for all his men, and each one was provided with a bayonet.

Thus it was that the guerrillas, in the midst of their expected triumph, saw the men of Unionists sink upon one knee and present a long array of glittering steel; while, at the same moment, the invalid corps, as the boys and old men may be called, began to blaze away on each flank. To ride a horse against an unarmed foe is one thing; but to urge him against a bayonet is a decidedly different matter; and, as the Centaurs saw this bold front, they hesitated perceptibly.

Keeler, however, was a man not easily frightened, nor was he inclined to estimate the prowess of the defenders very highly. His clear voice arose above all other sounds:

"On, Centaurs, on! Look your enemy in the eyes, and hit them hard. Strike for the Confederacy!"

His words revived the ebbing courage of the guerrillas; they pressed on, crossed the intervening space and met the Centaurs.

As short a time as they had been in the field, Keeler had taught them many a trick of war; and, when their horses' breasts were pierced, they bent forward and tried to turn the bayonets aside with their sabers.

In many cases they succeeded, but in others it was quite the reverse, and the war steeds began to rear and scream loudly as they were cut through skin and flesh.

Then all was confusion. The Union line became broken, and sabers began to ring against rifle barrels and opposing blades; men grappled hand to hand; shouts and curses were heard on each side, and above all sounded that most terrible sound of battle—the scream of wounded horses.

## CHAPTER VII.

### BARLOW'S ADVENTURE.

Max Barlow was fighting like a tiger. He had dear ones to battle for—a mother and six children, and he was a father and the men looked to him for example. He knew this, and wielded his sword with great skill and execution.

As he fought, he saw that his followers were bound on the guerrillas in a circle.

Already many gray-uniformed men were on the ground, lying side by side with dead horses; and the Unionists fought with grim determination, which was encouraging to their leader.

Wherever the guerrillas galloped, a bayonet, already red with Confederate blood, seemed sure to appear, and their advantage of being mounted did not avail them much.

Barlow was fighting in vain, for each side had a swordsmen of great ability, he would gladly have crossed blades with the rival chief; but it was not so to be. Either through design or chance Keeler kept out of the way.

For some time the fight went on, but the leader of the Centaurs clearly perceived that his band was being roughly handled. Too many were falling to make amends for possible plunder, and he resolved to withdraw while he could, in vain, he reached Keeler's village was not so well defended.

One thing he aspired to do, however, before he went. If he could capture the Union captain it would be a creditable exploit, and would in a degree make amends for the general defeat.

He called to two of his men, and the three precipitated themselves together upon Barlow.

The latter was glad to see Keeler, and tried to get him, but one of the men caught his sword-arm and clung like a mastiff.

Another moment and Max was lifted clear of the ground and laid across Keeler's horse just in front of the rider. With such odds struggle was vain, and a cord was wound around his hands.

"Be quiet, now, or I will shoot!" Keeler sharply said. Then, raising his voice, he shouted a brief command to his men.

They heard it with joy, and obeyed promptly.

It was an order for retreat; and at the word the Jasper Centaurs shook off their foes, wheeled and dashed away from the scene of strife, leaving the guerrillas in sole mastery.

The villagers had won the battle; the guerrillas had received a disastrous check, and, as they fled in haste, the Union chiefs caused them to curse in concert—but Max Barlow was prisoner.

He lay across the back of Keeler's horse in an uncomfortable position, his feet hanging



off one side and his head the other. This fact, however, gave him an idea.

He looked keenly about, and, seeing that all was favorable if the first step could be taken, proceeded to try the cords on his hands.

They had been hastily applied, and he had cunningly held his wrists a little apart when being bound. Now, he found by experimenting, they were in a condition to be easily cast off.

His scheme of escape was a desperate one; but he had no desire to become a captive of the Union, and if he moved at all it must be promptly.

He twisted his hands about stealthily, and the cords fell off.

Well. Then, without stirring his body, he reached down and laid hold of the saddle-girth. He wished to unbuckle it, but it had been drawn so tightly that he almost abandoned hope, as his fingers encountered the taut strap.

"It's do or die; I must unbuckle it," he muttered.

So he put forth all of his strength, tightened the girth still more, loosened the buckle and slowly drew it through the longer end of the strap.

Thus far, all was well.

Keeler sat on a saddle which could easily be thrown off, and Max had his hands to himself.

They were well at the front, too, for the guerrilla chief rode a horse remarkable for his speed—even then he was holding him in to avoid distancing his followers—and all seemed ripe for an instant.

Suddenly the passive mood of the prisoner vanished. He came up from his daunting position with surprising agility, and, as the surprised guerrilla raised his hand to strike him, he received a push which swept him to one side.

Never suspecting that the girth had been tampered with, Keeler tried only to hang fast to the saddle.

In this attempt he succeeded only too well for his own good.

He hung to the saddle, but the saddle did not hang to the horse. Instead, it went off as though greased, and, accompanied by Keeler, fell crashing to the ground.

Barlow saved himself from the same fate. He caught at the horse's mane, however, and, being a good rider, succeeded in holding fast. Then he grasped at the bridle-rein and was safe in position.

But the guerrilla did not expect the horse into a mad gallop; and, looking back, as he shot rapidly away, Max saw the discomfited guerrilla still regaining his feet and pouring out a torrent of curses and orders to the men. Max shouted triumphantly, waved one hand in farewell to the men who had had no bullets to annoy him, and then the intervening space rapidly widened.

The Union riders heard much about the speed of Keeler's horse, but never before had he thought that it would ever be used to his benefit; and he felt a natural triumph, mingled with joy at his own escape, as he left the guerrillas behind.

Pursuit was made, as a matter of course, but it was like chasing the wind, and in the rapidly gathering shades of night, the hostile riders were soon lost to each other's sight.

Barlow dared not turn back to the village at once, but he bore around to the right gradually, took advantage of a wood, and was soon going in the direction of the village.

Somehow later, he saw the guerrillas pass on his right hand, but they were too distant to be observed closely, and when they were gone he resumed his way.

His course carried him to the very wood where he had heard the first struck the Unionists—the lynching party—and as he was riding past, he was surprised to see Abe Taylor and Dave Harney come out and stand in his path.

"You're do, do, cap'n," said the latter, in a manner which showed that he knew nothing of Barlow's brief captivity. "Is all quiet at the village?"

"I suppose so; why not? What are doing here?"

Harney wiped his forehead with his sleeve in a nervous manner.

"Ain't you heered what happened hyar there?" he asked, in a manner equally nervous.

"No. What do you mean?"

"Abe—you tell."

"No," said Taylor, curtly. "I ain't a coward, but I'll face the music; but you agreed ter tell the story."

Dave told the captain all that had transpired.

"What can we do?" Dave asked. "Search!" was the terse reply. "Abe Taylor, if you had the honor of being one of the lynchers, go over the ground again and look for a clew."

It was done, but nothing came of it. Edgar Peterson, dead or alive, had disappeared as completely as though buried, and the lynchers' rope was also beyond their sight.

Abe had made a full explanation of the tragic affair, and Barlow decided that it must be the guerrillas had returned and cut down the victim—or it might be some stranger, unseen by Taylor, had done the work at the time of the first capture.

The possibility that Edgar might be alive and at the Somers' cottage, caused Barlow to go there on a feigned errand. He saw both Olive and Lena, and when he inquired for Edgar, he told him he had gone to the village with the other men.

She was calm in her mein, and, satisfied that she knew nothing of the tragedy, he rejoined Harney and Taylor, and the three returned to the village, Barlow retaining the captured horse.

His anger against Sam Stiles was at white heat, and he at once sought for that person. In vain, however, for Stiles had disappeared as completely as Edgar had done.

The captain devoted all his attention to caring for those wounded in the fight with the Jasper Centaurs, but his mind was always on the lynchers' victim. He felt so completely helpless, and he desired so much information and honor that it seemed a terrible thing for him to be thus cut off at the beginning of his brighter career.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

##### "THE PATFINDER."

Barlow expected to solve the mystery of Edgar's disappearance on the following morning, but in this he was disappointed. Edgar did not appear, and all attempts to solve the mystery of the gallows-tree were futile.

The ground in the vicinity was plowed up by the hoofs of Keeler's cavalry, and even Dave Harney, who was a skillful trailer, failed to find anything bearing on a solution of the mystery.

Barlow was very much perplexed. The great question in his mind was whether Peterson was dead or alive. If the latter, he seemed to have fled from the neighborhood; if the former, what had become of his body? But he could not be relieved of the conviction he had not been cut down by the guerrillas. If they had done the work, it was not likely they would have carried off the rope. Some of the victim's enemies suggested that he might even try to bring with Keeler's band, but there was no proof in support of the theory, and Max did not for a moment believe in it.

The news of the hanging went abroad, and reached the ears of Lena Somers and her friends. The former wept bitterly, and besought Barlow to solve the mystery, but he could not gain any clew.

Days went on, and the mystery remained as deep as ever. Edgar Peterson was seen no more in the town, and people came to speak of him as one dead.

Barlow saw that Lena was grieving deeply, and he tried to have forgotten how to smile; and the captain longed to get his hands on the man who had started the lynchings.

Sam Stiles, however, was seen no more about the place.

During the weeks that followed, Barlow led his men on many dashes against the Confederates. At times he lost men, but the vacancies were quickly filled, and the band was making for itself a name throughout all Missouri.

Somehow, he could never encounter Keeler's guerrillas, much as he desired it. That chief was like a will-o'-the-wisp; and, despite his superiority of numbers, he seemed reluctant to meet the man who was riding his horse all along the Ozark district.

It may be mentioned here that, acting on a hint from his captors, Keeler had learned to discriminate between friend and foe, and he was more of a soldier and less of a common robber than when he first took to the saddle.

Still, he was wild and lawless in his way, and, between his force and others of the same kind, Missouri was sadly scourged by irregular bands.

Many of these were without uniforms, and dressed in the home-made, battered-colored suits, and armed in every conceivable fash-

ion—they made anything but dashing looking defenders of a growing cause.

Toward the last of July, occurred two events which produced a material change in Barlow's plans. The first came when the band, acting in concert with another, was attacked by a superior force of Confederates and nearly annihilated; and the second may be learned from a conversation between Barlow and Dave Harney the following morning.

"How many men are fit for duty, Dave?"

"About twenty, cap'n."

"Ah! that was a fatal fight. I warned the major, but he cut all in places."

"They died facin' the enemy."

"They died nobly, but they are lost to the Union."

"And, cap'n—"

"What?"

"The rest say they are sick of irregular war. They want ter jine the army, an' they are lookin' toward General Lyon with greedy eyes."

"Let them go! I am glad of it. Dave, I, too, am sick of this life. Here we are, our selves for resources, we have to plunder too much to suit me. To-day I will disband the troop, and then I am off for St. Louis."

"What for?" Dave asked, in amazement.

"To offer my services to General Fremont. You know I told you yesterday that he had been appointed to the command of the Western Department. Dave, I had rather serve under that man than any other in this country. He is a hero, if one ever lived. Remember how he led that gallant band of adventurers through the ice and snow of the Rocky Mountains. They suffered fearfully, but the pathfinder's brave heart never quailed."

"He's a man o' a kind like. None o' your carpet soldiers fur me. John C. Fremont has been a man among men, an' when he sets soldiers on a march he will cut the biggest right through Missouri. But, Lord bless you, he ain't got the material now. He lacks men and guns, big an' leetle, an' I reckon he won't find money plenty ter pay his volunteers."

"He will be crippled until he gets them; but to the soldier-explorer I am going. I east my fortunes with his, if he will have me."

So that day Max Barlow bade farewell to his band, and made his way to Lena and Somers and started for St. Louis, where he arrived on the last day of July.

John C. Fremont, who had won such deserved honor in the West by crossing the continent, and with a band of gallant explorers—an exploit which will live in the history of our country as long as the republic is mentioned among men—had been placed in charge of the department in which Missouri was contained, with his headquarters at St. Louis.

His work began under discouraging circumstances.

The three months men were leaving the service, and money was lacking to pay new recruits.

His cannon were to be sent from Washington—but they went to the Army of the Potomac, and the brave Pathfinder was beset on all sides by trouble and embarrassment.

Such was the condition of affairs when Max Barlow arrived in St. Louis.

By chance he met the Pathfinder sooner than he had expected.

Standing in the street, he saw the brave explorer ride past, accompanied by Adjutant-General Harding and others, and Max lifted his voice to join with those who cheered the riders.

"It's a proper good sight, ain't it?" said a voice at his elbow.

Barlow wheeled, and then put out his hand as he saw the well-remembered face of Sharps, the scout.

"You here?" he exclaimed.

"I should remark that I am. I'm most all ways 'round somewhar," said the sharpshooter.

"I have not seen you since Sigel's battle."

"That's because you ain't been in the right place. I ain't been idle durin' that time. Ask Kurland, or General Lyon—or Fremont, fur that matter."

"Do you know General Fremont?"

"I am his scout!"

The red-haired sharpshooter drew himself up to his full height and looked as proud as the peaks of the Ozark.

"I am going to offer my services to him."

"Be you?" said Sharps, eagerly. "Good fur you; go right in an' win. There's no other man in this country. When I say this I allow General Lyon ter be as brave a





He made known his errand briefly and modestly. He wanted active service, and, being tired of irregular warfare, had come to offer his sword to the ex-explorer.

Fre蒙特 looked at him keenly. He noted the robust form and firm face of the applicant, and a look of pleasure stole across his face. Daring adventurer that he had been, his nature was still amiable and his heart large.

"I should you have come to me," he said, "though I have no vacancy just at present, or, rather, we lack the means of organizing the troops who are ready to pour to our aid with your own pay and firm faith in them. When that day comes I shall be glad to give you a position. Just at present—"

The Pathfinder paused, reflected for a moment, and then turned to an orderly.

"Send Major Zagonyi here," he said.

Barlow started slightly. He had heard of Major Zagonyi before. A Hungarian, who had been a soldier in his native land, he had come to the United States as an exile. Men said that he was brave and true, and that with him the art of war was a trade wherein he was an adept. It was known, too, that he had offered his sword to Fremont, but that he was not wanted for the Hungarian, few knew at that period.

He came in promptly, a soldier in look and bearing, and Barlow did not find it hard to believe the reports he had heard of his valor.

The Pathfinder introduced the two.

"I shall be glad to have met Captain Barlow, for of him I have before heard," said the Hungarian, in his peculiarly worded English.

"And I am glad to meet the patriot of Hungary," added Barlow, promptly.

"Ah! you shall not flatter me now, for my small deeds sound poor to great words," said Major Zagonyi, with the modesty of a truly brave man.

"Don't quarrel, gentlemen," said Fremont, smiling. "Save all that for the enemies of the republic. This soldier, major, wishes to see service. Where can we find a place for him?"

The Hungarian looked first at Barlow and then at the general.

"There are places," he quietly said.

"And he would fill any vacancy?"

"Well, general, well, I make sure. We understand each other, then. Captain Barlow, your offer is favorably received, and you shall see service near my own banner. Just at present, as I will before, there is nothing to be done here; but there is one place where you can use your sword with effect."

"And that, general?"

"Is with Lyon. As you are probably aware, the enemy is marching on Springfield, and a battle must ensue. If you wish, you can go there and aid the cause. When the fighting here is over, I will give you a permanent place for you. I shall offer you a choice between two positions. Major Zagonyi and myself have a plan in view which will aid our country, and the young men, among whom these you will be welcome."

"I choose that position, then."

"As a private?"

"As any other."

"And that is your choice. Now, I will write a letter to General Lyon, which will probably give you a position near him during the battle, and may win you glory."

Half an hour later Barlow took the two officers to Springfield with a letter to the general.

Before leaving St. Louis, he called on Sharpshot, and had a conversation with him in regard to the affairs of the previous night; but he was hurried to get daylight into the mystery. The scout expressed the idea that the note from "Ozark" was only intended as a scare from the baffled robbers, but Barlow was not so sanguine.

Pathfinder gathered the threads of evidence, he was inclined to think he really had an enemy, who deliberately tried to assassinate him; but who it was, and what was the cause of his enmity, could not be conjectured.

In conclusion, Barlow told the sharpshooter of his proposed journey to Springfield.

"Mebbe I'll be there, too," said the latter. "I like the smell o' smoke, and I want ter get a crack at the enemy. I never was made for fightin' by word o' mouth."

They separated, and Barlow began his journey to the battle, which was to reflect. The military situation, his own future, the vague words of the Pathfinder, the night assault, the mysterious warning—all came before him for reflection.

Take the hill between the army of a plan, he thought at times about Sharpshot. The

man seemed to be a peculiar character. A veteran borderer, he was uncouth enough of face and dress, but his heart seemed to be true; and, somehow, Barlow was drawn toward him. Brief as their acquaintance had been, he felt sure the confidence would not be misplaced.

Our soldier arrived at Springfield on the evening of August 1. It was a critical period with the Union fortunes in Missouri. General Lyon held the place with five thousand troops, among whom was Sigel, while a Confederate army of four times that strength was being hurled upon him, led by Generals McCulloch, Price and Pearce.

Springfield was ill-calculated for defense. Situated on an open plain, only a large army behind good fortifications could hope to hold it in battle, and the five thousand soldiers were too few for the purpose, even when led by so gallant a general as Lyon.

Barlow reported, and was quickly assigned to a position.

The cloud deepened every day. The Confederates came nearer, and finally encamped near Wilson's Creek, but they were not in the best of condition. During their march they had been without food, and had eaten green corn by the way; they were poorly clad, and in many cases only half armed.

On the ninth Lyon held a council of officers to decide whether Springfield should be evacuated or battle given the enemy. Neither plan proved satisfactory. To retreat was to lose valuable ground and breed demoralization among the loyal men of Missouri; to fight was to risk the whole army.

Still, the defenders were brave-hearted, and they finally decided to risk all against their foe, outnumbered as they were.

On the tenth the armies were in battle. McCulloch proposed to at once push forward on the town; while Lyon resolved to go out and meet his rival at Wilson's Creek. Better fight there than be hemmed in at Springfield.

Lyon formed his little force into two parties, the larger of which, led by himself, was to strike the Confederate front, while Sigel, with the smaller, was to operate against the rear.

At five o'clock that evening the army moved, but it was an hour past midnight when the Confederate fires were sighted, and four hours later when the battle began.

On the morning of the battle the Confederates came to camp in confusion, and then the Confederates awoke to the fact that while they had been preparing for a forward movement, they had been caught napping.

The Confederates moved with vigor after the pickets were driven in. A small force was thrown across the creek at a bend, to strengthen the left flank, and then the main body moved forward.

The country was hilly and broken, and, with so many places suitable for a stand and defense, the Union men, every moment, thought to see their opponents in force.

Barlow had been placed at the head of fifty men with the rank of captain. His force was composed wholly of new recruits, but they were men accustomed for years to the use of the weapons they bore, having fought with Indians, Indians and border ruffians, and he had no fears as to their courage.

One grizzled old fellow strode near Barlow and uttered remarks which were so sensible that the captain did not check him.

"Ef they knows their business, we'll see them soon," said the veteran. "They don't let all o' these hills go unprotected. Keep your eyes peeled, and you'll see 'em when they tries that dodge, jest let your howlin' wildcats pay 'em in kind."

Barlow did not answer, but the man's prophecy was soon fulfilled, and they were passing along a ravine, and as the ascent beyond was reached the enemy was seen in large numbers and awaiting their advance.

"Eternal tigers!" said the veteran, "hev we got 'em now, or are we?"

"I'll be wot we can't keep them down," said a man at his side.

"We'll be lucky ter get them down at all," added still another.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE DEATH OF LYON.

While his men jested, Barlow was looking with consideration at the force that was in the front. It was almost the entire body of Price's division, and the artillery yawning behind the infantry, looked grim enough. They were the best of the forces that crush the Unionists by weight of numbers.

The leaders of the latter army, however,

were wise enough to go slow. The battalions of Major Osterhaus, with several companies of Missouri volunteers, which included Barlow's, were thrown forward as skirmishers.

Simultaneously with this movement, several guns of the Tenth Battery, under Lieutenant Sakalski, began a heavy firing, and, a little later, the whole battery coming into position, the slaughter of the Confederates became general.

They gave ground, very shortly, and the fighting became general all along the line.

Barlow's borderers were always in the thickest of the fray, and his only trouble was to find a dozen feet of danger too great to be dared. "They seemed to forget there was such a thing as caution, and at a word would have hurled themselves without support against the whole hostile force."

As it was, their fire was deadly and rapid. When not in advance, they fought in the old style of the border. Their leader, who had trusted his useless sword into its scabbard and was himself using a rifle, thrilled as he saw them battling.

Looking at any particular man, an observer might have seen him lying flat on his back behind a rock or log, rapidly reloading his rifle. Then he would spring forward, thrust out the deadly weapon, cover an enemy and pull the trigger. And they seldom fired in vain.

The roar of the battle was deep and heavy. Only the superior artillery of the Unionists had preserved them thus far, but the batteries of Totten, Dubois and Steele were landed with rare skill and judgment.

The fighting continued with varying fortunes, but to decide of advantage to either, but an event was at hand which was calculated to deal a great blow to the Union army and the North at large.

On the tenth, the two best regiments of Union soldiers were fighting against great odds, and though they showed undiminished valor, it was plain that fatigue, thirst and the press of numbers was telling upon them terribly.

General Lyon saw their danger, and ordered the Second Kansas to their support, himself accompanying it. A desperate struggle ensued.

The brave general rode along the line in the thickest of the fight, encouraging his men, and not heeding the bullets which whistled past him as though they had been common flies.

Then Colonel Mitchell of the Second Kansas fell severely wounded, and the soldiers faltered. They were without a leader when one was most needed.

Lyon saw their peril and spurred to their front.

"Come on!" he cried, in tones which thrilled them; "I will lead you!"

They rushed to his words, for all loved the brave soldier, and he looked like one sublimely gifted then, but they never followed him to victory.

From the Confederate line came a rifle-ball which found a path to a target too sacred and noble to have thus stopped a traitor's shot.

Brave Lyon was pierced almost through the heart; and, falling into the arms of his body-guard, he lay motionless.

The end came speedily, and among the names of the martyrs who had died for their country, the recording angel wrote that of Nathaniel Lyon.

Terrible, indeed, was the calamity, but Major Sturgis, upon whom the command devolved, managed to hold the enemy in check, and the news of Lyon's death was not at once known to the army.

While this sad event was transpiring at the right, an occurrence relating more closely to the thread of our story was happening to Barlow and his bordermen on the left.

The lines of the four times their number on the extreme end of the line; and, suddenly, a strong force of Confederate horsemen swept from a wood and charged down upon them.

Barlow ordered his braves to stand firm, and many a saddle was emptied as the gray riders came.

Still, they were not checked, and with a feeling akin to despair, Max saw that they must engage in a hand to hand fight.

The dash of the cavalry had separated the borderers from the army proper; and, hemmed in alone in a small valley, they must fight against the odds, and the odds were four times their number of mounted men, or take to flight and be cut down in their rear.

Terrible, indeed, were the odds. The horsemen were the best of the army, and their evident expectations of quick and complete victory seemed well grounded.

Barlow's band, however, were resolved to die bravely, if, indeed, they must die at all. "Men!" he shouted, "show your border fighting now. Up and at the enemy; and, remember, you fight for Missouri and the Union! Don't let them see our backs!"

His men responded with a cheer, and then came the rush of the cavalry.

With sabers glancing they swept on, planning to carry all before them; and their line was not so keen bayonets to dread. The rifles were for shooting, not for close quarters.

What a surprise awaited the exultant foe!

As their horses' feet flung the turf into the borderers' faces, the latter sprang forward like tigers. Each man seized a horse by the rein, and few there were who did not manage to avoid the downward stroke of the sabre.

It was a grand picture, despite its horror as a feature of war—grand because of the lofty courage of the ex-Indian fighters. The greater part of them had dropped their empty rifles, and where their feet hauled closed on the rein, their right was busy with a long-bladed bowie.

Some struck at the necks of the horses, others at the riders, and others, still, vaulted to the saddle beside the gray riders and clutched at throat or sabre-hand.

Such a scene had not been observed at any previous stage of the battle, and it can only be likened to the leap of the fabled panther upon his prey, and then is busy with tooth and claw.

Barlow himself, armed with his sword, had taken a firm stand to fight while life lasted.

The rush of the crowd seemed sure at first to prevail before it, but as the came, the Union officer first beat aside a sabre stroke, and then, after a brief exchange of blows, thrust the rider to the heart.

The fight went on.

To the bordermen lay dead on the ground, but every one that lived had scored an enemy.

It was a wild, ferocious struggle, such as is rarely seen in battle.

The ex-Indian fighters were truly human panthers.

At this critical moment, when it seemed as though the brave fellows must every one die facing the enemy, came another of those fleeting turns in the tide so often seen in warfare.

Without a word of warning, a body of Union infantry charged along the level of the valley.

Their movements made no sound on the soft grass, and the Confederates did not suspect that a force fully their equal in numbers was coming at double-quick.

It was a deceptive silence, but firm resolution appeared in the faces of the newcomers, and the glistering of the sun upon their bayonets showed how they were going to attack.

The blow came.

Like a lightning, turbulent sea, the rescuers dashed themselves on the troopers.

This time it was man to man, and as the bordermen saw the turn of the tide, they rallied afresh and began to fight like fiends.

Ah! then how busy were those once-bright bayonets, always so terrible a weapon of war.

The alarm spread quickly; they faltered, gave ground, broke and fled.

A short distance the ride of the bayonet in pursuit, but it would be fatal to venture far from the main body of the Union force and they turned back.

The bordermen, tired at last of cheering, suddenly saw that their leader was not among them.

Alarmed, they looked among the dead, but he was not there, and they could only conclude that he was a prisoner.

He was seen by the men who fought the fight.

Let us see what became of him.

Hard pressed by an enemy, Barlow did not perceive the charge of the infantry until their blow was dealt, and he was still fighting, when the Confederates, almost en masse, in frame, leaped from his saddle, caught the captain up as though he had been a child, and laid him across his knees.

This unexpected maneuver, coupled with a furious burst on the part of the former ad- versary, had caused Barlow's sword to fall from his hand, and, as he lay thus, he found he had not a weapon upon which he could place his hands.

His struggles were in vain, for the Confederates used the strength of an ox, and Barlow was forced to lie in impotent rage while the troopers beat their disorderly retreat.

They went, and with them went Max, a

hopeless prisoner, and rapidly being carried to the rear of the Confederate line.

## CHAPTER XII.

### MAX BECOMES A GUERRILLA.

The battle went on with varying fortunes. It was made up of sharp, decisive work; the destruction was often great, and, as long as life lasted, will those engaged remember the battle of Wilson's Creek.

Outnumbered as they were, the Union army would have been cut to pieces and hurled back to Springfield, only to fall completely in the hands of the enemy a little later, had it not been for the artillery.

Those great guns saved the day.

Totten, Dubois and Steele were at all times busy, and, where they used the cannon, the loss of the enemy was great.

These batteries saved the Union army at the last grapple of the day.

Deceived by a trick of the enemy, who showed a flag captured from the boys in blue, the Union army had sprung upon the latter, when Totten and Dubois turned their guns upon the deceitful foe, and, aided by a stout charge of the infantry, drove back the Confederates with heavy loss.

It was the last fight of the long series.

A nominal victory had been gained by the Union arms, but the foe had only retreated a short distance.

A council of officers being held, Major Sturges proposed to retreat to Springfield.

They went, and on the way were joined by Sigel and three of the twelve hundred men he had led to attack the Confederate rear.

Where had Sigel been during all the fight? The story was now told, and it was found he had been deceived by the same low stratagem which nearly ruined Sturges' command at a later period of the day—a large body of Confederates had shown a Union flag and so drawn Sigel's force into a trap, where the majority of them were captured.

The junction effected, as before related, Sigel, who ranked Sturges, assumed command, and the broken army went steadily on toward Springfield.

Max Barlow did not accompany his friends. A prisoner in the Confederate camp, he had been huddled together with others, among whom were some taken from Sigel's command, and thus he found himself suspended while the battle raged at the front.

Barlow was disconsolate enough. It was not in his nature to relish inaction when his efforts were needed in the Union cause, and since his capture he had seen with his own eyes the brave men falling around him against the little army.

When Sturges retreated, his enemy had no heart for following him. They claimed the battle as theirs, but their loss was heavy, and they allowed the Unionists to go in peace.

Captain Barlow, as he lay among the other prisoners, keenly watched the scene around him; and, among other things, he discovered the man who had been his enemy on the ground. He saw him once, only a few yards away, but the fellow remained ignorant of the fact that he was thus watched.

The scene had not changed materially while he lay there, but the effect of it and its vicinity. Some of the prisoners were deep in despair, while others, among whom was Barlow, were inclined to take matters as easy as possible.

Max was weary enough after the day's fighting, and, calmly lying down, he prepared to get a little sleep. Close at hand passed a guard. Barlow watched him indifferently for a few minutes as he walked his beat, and then he turned his eyes to his own side.

Five minutes later he opened them suddenly. He had felt a touch on his arm, and, as he looked, he saw a man lying close beside him. Before he closed his eyes, the man had been beside him, and he saw his eyes.

"Hush!" the latter whispered. "Be silent, for your life!"

Max made no reply, but used his eyes well. The voice sounded familiar, but the darkness hid the face.

"Do you know me?" continued the other.

"No," Barlow answered.

"I'm Sharps, the sharpshooter!"

The captain could not avoid a start, and again he closed his eyes, but not without silence. His face now began to be more distinct, and the prisoner saw that it was indeed the scout.

"Are you sharp enough to kerri out my plan?" said Max, promptly.

"I'll try," said Max, promptly.

"I'm hyar ter rescue you. I'll cut your bonds, if you have any—"

"I am not bound."

"Good! Well, I want you ter roll softly an' slowly toward the thicket yender. Go mighty slow, or you will be seen. I'll stay by your place. When you reach the trees, look at the foot of the biggest tree an' you'll see a Confederate uniform rolled in a bundle. Put that on over your'n jest as quick as possible. When you have had time ter dress, I'll roll the bundle an' give you. Then I'll both be in gray, an' we kin easily escape from the camp. See?"

Barlow did see, and, though the undertaking seemed sure to fail, he was not disposed to let the chance pass untried. He pressed Sharps' hand and then began the work.

Once, only, did he roll over at the start. Then he paused and looked about. The guard was steadily pacing his beat, the scout lay like a dead man and no one seemed watching the captain.

Again he rolled over. All remained as before.

It was a terribly exciting moment, but it was not Max Barlow's first adventure. He turned again, and yet once more, and still no alarming thing was heard or seen.

He was half way to the bushes. They seemed to stretch out their branches like the welcoming hands of a friend.

In the midst of a venture—how would it end?

Steadily he moved on. Now and then, some of the other prisoners stirred restlessly, but no one seemed to notice his own movements. He steadily reached the bushes, and then he slipped their cover.

Arising to his feet, he looked back and saw the guard at his best. Sharps lay perfectly still on the ground.

"Brave fellow!" muttered Barlow. "He is jewel of a scout, but just at present."

It was no time for delay. The captain entered the thicket, searched for the bundle, and found it as the scout had said. He felt a momentary fear that it would not be large enough, but Sharps had made no mistake. In went on over Barlow's own uniform and fitted well.

He was then ready for the next step in the venture, and had only to wait for the scout.

At that moment, however, voices sounded at the edge of the thicket, and he felt a thrill of apprehension.

The unseen men began pushing through the bushes, and Max knew not which way to turn.

Trusting to the darkness, he stepped behind a tree and awaited in dead silence.

The men advanced, muttered among themselves and passed, so that Barlow was actually among them.

He was seen. One of them addressed him carelessly, he answered with a rude dialect, and then stood firm, trusting to luck.

"How many are here?" one of the newcomers asked.

A count was made.

"Seven, besides yourself, captain."

The count included Barlow.

"That is correct," said the leader.

Max realized that, owing to the darkness, the men had not suspected but what he had come with them, and as they had previously been uncertain as to their number, there was a chance that the deception might be continued.

Somehow, the voice of him who seemed to be the leader, sounded familiar, but Max could not place it.

"I had a little work on hand which I wish to do secretly, and then return to camp without your absence being discovered. Of course, we can go anyway, for we are under no man's orders; but I want to keep the matter dark. You seven are ready to follow me, are you?"

Several of the men answered affirmatively.

"Then follow me at once. Walk in pairs, and keep close to my heels. Come on."

He led them to the thicket, and the men began to execute his orders.

"Jones, I reckon you an' I kin walk 'long-side each other, an' not quarrel."

A burly fellow addressed the remark to Barlow. It showed that the Unionist was mistaken for a man who bore the melodious name of Jones, and it also showed that the counterfeit Confederate must either fall into line or invite comment, and possibly discovery.

He longed to decline the honor tendered him, but dared not do so.

"I reckon we kin," he said, in reply.

Then he and the burly man strode from the bushes, side by side, with men in front and in the rear.

Barlow was in a state of mental demoralization. He was starting on an expedition of an unknown character; he was hopelessly



leaving Sharpsheet, and if the venture did not end in his discomfiture it would be a wonder.

Surrounded by these men, who were his deadly enemies, if they had but known it, he walked through the Confederate camp. Other men looked at them, but none in suspicion.

Beyond the heart of the camp, the leader paused.

"If any of you are short of weapons, help yourselves from that pile," he said, pointing to a pile of arms.

"It was a chance Barlow did not fail to improve. He had not have so much as a pen-knife, but from the pile he took a musket, a pair of revolvers, and a sabre—the latter because he saw that his companions were similarly armed.

"Now for the horses," said the leader.

"Follow me."

Barlow had been studying the last speaker, and trying to remember where he had seen him before, and now he made a discovery.

He was Keeler, the guerrilla!

Truly, the Unionist was in dangerous company.

Rapidly he tried to form a plan of escape. He had heard that since the Confederate had seized his horse, he had sworn to kill the man who had confiscated him, and discovery would probably result in worse than ordinary captivity.

Once, Barlow was on the point of trying to dash away, but second thought showed him that he could not but meet with a bad reception, and he resolved to bide his time.

Going a little further, they reached a number of horses, and the guerrillas began to select such as pleased them, without a personal regard for previous ownership.

Barlow found one which he judged to be fleet-footed, and when the other men swung into the saddle he was not far behind.

Keeler gave another order, and the party started on their faces due south.

They were fairly off on their way, to Barlow, unknown expedition, and he was far from feeling at ease. Why he was not already in the cool of the night, but had to know how much he resembled the genuine Jones, he would have felt more at ease. This fact, together with the darkness, was greatly in his favor.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### KEELER'S LITTLE GAME.

Not far did the guerrillas go before Keeler put his horse into a sharp trot, and the eight men swept away down the road.

The leader and another man were at the front, while the others rode abreast in threes.

Barlow was a good deal interested in this mysterious expedition, but he could only conjecture that Keeler saw a chance for plunder, and when anything of the kind was to be done, he was sure to find the practices of the guerrilla forbade inactivity.

Whatever was in store for them there was at present no chance for him to escape. Riding as the center man of the first trio, he was literally surrounded by his enemies, and as long as that lasted he must think himself lucky if he was not stripped of his false honors.

As Jones, he was safe; as a Unionist, among such men, and so far from others, he would probably get a send-off on his final worldly journey.

The country was as familiar to him as the palm of his own hand. Hundreds of times he had passed over it as a boy, and in his maturer years; while only a few miles to the front was the village where the greater part of his life had been passed.

This fact suddenly occurred to him with startling force. They were heading directly toward the village. Was that the objective point of their expedition?

The fear became a strong suspicion, and deep conviction. Nearer and nearer they rode, until only half a mile lay between them and Barlow's old friends. He became greatly excited internally, for it seemed certain that the village, or some of its inhabitants, were in danger.

Keeler moderated his pace, and paid more attention to his surroundings. He had but a handful of men, and if they should run upon any Unionists, either they would fare badly, or the village was in the nominal possession of the Confederates, but no force of soldiers was near, and many of the people were loyal to the old flag.

After they did not enter the village, but, keeping to the east, rode slowly past, and in a short time entered a small piece of wood.

Barlow felt varied emotions at this stage of

their journey. It was in this very wood that Edgar Peterson had been hanged, and the mystery surrounding his subsequent disappearance was still unsolved.

Had he been taken away with life extinct and given secret burial, or had some friend rescued him in time, and enabled him to escape the clutches of Judge Lynch?

Whichever was the case, it had been a sad affair, and Barlow shuddered as they rode under the trees.

His thoughts wandered to another subject, however. A hundred yards beyond the wood stood the house of Mr. Somers, and there was all that was tender in Barlow's life. He thought then of Olive, and wondered if herself were still as true as he, sleeping, unconscious of the enemy so near.

Ho! what means this halt in the wood so near the Somers' cottage?

"Dismount," said Keeler.

His men obeyed, and stood grouped about him.

"I will now tell you the work in hand," said the guerrilla chief, in a subdued voice.

In one corner of the wood were two men, wanted by certain men. I want one, and another man wants the other. With your help I am going to take them now. Are you with me?"

"Yes," several of the men answered together.

Barlow, however, was silent. The announcement had fallen upon him like a thunderbolt. Hostile nations might arise in arms, and battle might be fought, earthquakes might occur, and floods come, yet, to a considerable degree, his mind would be easy so long as Olive Somers remained safe and unharmed.

He felt, then, that cottage was the most sacred spot on earth, for it contained the woman he loved and hoped to one day call his wife. Now, as he heard the cool and villainous plans of the guerrilla, his blood seemed to chill.

"Good!" said Keeler, in answer to the response of the men. "I knew I could count on you, and you shall not go unrewarded."

He turned to the two men in the wood. Only the girls and Abram Somers are there, and he is too old to do much harm."

"We will hang him if he proves ugly," said one of the guerrillas.

"Let a knife or revolver do the work as circumstances require. Of course, if he shows fight, we must not leave him alive. Now, hear my plan, which is simple: We will surround the house, and I will knock at the door. When I open, and then in we go. Next, I will state my errand and carry it out. The two girls, Olive and Lena, go with us; the old man remains—dead or alive!"

The cool villainy of the plan astounded Barlow, who clearly perceived that he had work to do. He blessed the lucky chance which had made him one of the party, even while he did not see how he was to successfully carry out Keeler's plot.

With seven men against him, it looked as though he was doomed to fail, if not to be slain in trying; but not for an instant did he think of failing to do his utmost.

The five Somerses should be saved from these ruffians, or he would die fighting for her. Keeler gave his directions plainly, and, leaving their horses in the wood, they stole from the porch and hid in the bushes.

All there was peaceful and quiet, though the dull light from a curtained window at the rear showed that all the household had not yet retired. Barlow knew the light shone from Keeler's own door.

Keeler moved first to this vicinity and tried to peer within, but the closely-drawn curtain baffled him.

"Jones," he said, in a subdued voice, "remain at this spot, and don't let a soul escape. Hardy and Eaton, each of you take an end of the house, and the rest of you follow me to the front. Don't harm the girls, for I will spare my life, but if the old man is ugly, shirk him as soon as you please."

Despite the blood-curdling way in which he finished, Barlow was pleased at the plan. By chance, he had been given just the position which he had desired, and he was resolved to move quickly when once free from observation.

The next few minutes were destined to be important ones in the lives of Olive and Lena. Barlow, however, would be rescued through the strange chance that had made Barlow a temporary follower of Keeler, or else they would be in the power of that lawless man—in his own words, he "wanted them."

Significant words, though, as yet, not wholly explained.

An observer would have said that Barlow

had no hope of saving the girls. With seven men against him, his chances were indeed small.

The genuine guerrillas went to their several posts, and Max had the rear of the house to himself.

He strode forward, and was about to tap on the window when a hand was laid on his shoulder. He wheeled like a flash, and saw the rebel who had been called Eaton.

"Don't be alarmed," said the latter, quickly; "I will be your friend, if you will let me."

"Ain't you my friend already?" asked the Unionist, recovering his wits quickly and using his disguised voice.

"I am, Max Barlow."

This time the captain started even more than before. Significant and ominous the name was that he heard pronounced, when spoken by one of Keeler's gang.

"Hush! not a word. I say we are friends, and I will prove it. You are for the North and I love the South, but I am no blood-hound to dog women. I will aid you to thwart Keeler's plans."

The man spoke quickly, and Barlow felt that there was sincerity in his voice, but it seemed so strange that he suspected a trap.

"Who and what—?" he began; but the other interrupted him impatiently.

"Max Barlow, will you ruin all? Keeler's knock may sound at the door any minute. Once and for all, will you trust me?"

"Yes," said the Unionist, quickly.

"Then do as I tell you. Go to the house alone, and trust to strategem. Let each one of us fire off one of the two revolvers we carry, in a rapid though irregular way, and then rush a course of the house on the side, with cries of alarm, saying that the Northerners are upon us. That will not put the inmates of the house on their guard, but will put the guerrillas to flight. I know their men, and they will not for it, they will go in haste. Will you do it?"

"Yes."

The manner of Eaton was so convincing that, for the moment, Max did not think that all this was a trick to get his revolver emptied. He felt sure his companion was acting in good faith, and was willing to go with the tide.

"Then, begin!"

They separated and each went to his old post.

A minute later, just as Keeler was about applying his knuckles to the door, a shot sounded from the east, and the captain, a second followed, then one from the rear, and close on their heels came half a dozen in an irregular way.

The guerrilla had paused at the first shot, muttering a curse, when he thought an accidental discharge of Eaton's revolver, but, as the fusillade continued, his views changed.

"The game is up!" he muttered, with a curse.

Then around the corner of the house dashed Eaton, at the top of his speed.

"The Unionists!" he shouted, at the top of his voice. "They are on us in full force. Run for your lives!"

Swinging his revolver above his head, the speaker dashed toward the wood, and the guerrillas began to follow. Keeler shouted commands to the men to hold their ground, but he might as well have called to the wind. When they fought, they wanted the odds in their favor, and they had no desire to figure as prisoners.

So, finding the chief deserted, the chief briskly brought up the rear, and they went at full speed for the wood.

Two or three shots sounded in the rear, and one bullet whistled close to Keeler's head, thus giving fresh fuel to the strategem.

They reached the woods, gained their horses, and leaped into the saddles; and, as they did so, the sharp crack of a rifle sounded in the rear, and a bit of lead tore through one fellow's arm.

No more was needed to complete the rout; but, as a side-show, several more bullets whistled about their ears, and they were all in accord as they spurred away in retreat.

No one was so surprised at the last firing as Eaton. He saw that Barlow, *alias* Jones, was not among them, but he had not expected him to be there, for, in fact, he was sure he had not, and the sharp, keen report which began the firing in the wood was that of a different weapon than that carried by Barlow.

Who, then, had fired the shot?

Captain Barlow had carried out his part of the plan, so far as the firing of his revolver was concerned; but he delayed so long in

joining in Eaton's alarm, that when he turned the corner he saw the guerrillas already in flight.

Perceiving this, it occurred to him that it was time for him to fall out of such dangerous company. Discovery meant trouble, if not an abrupt farewell to life, and, besides, he was needed at the house.

Consequently, he paused near the house, and saw the guerrillas continue their flight without regret on his part. The possibility that they might return, caused him to hasten to reload his revolver, and he had just finished the work when they disappeared among the trees.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### ZAGONYI AND THE GUARD.

At the same moment the window of Somers' room was thrown open, but Max did not look that way. He heard a rifle shot among the trees, followed by several reports in a different key, and the fact caused him fresh wonder.

Then, however, Abram's voice sounded behind him.

"Who's there?" he sharply asked.

Barlow turned toward the window.

"It is I, Max Barlow," he answered.

"Who is the trouble?"

The captain went closer and took the settler's hand, at the same time beginning a hurried explanation.

He was not in the darkness; but, as he cocked his revolver, the new comer spoke quickly.

"Hold up, there; don't sling any lead—leastwise not at me. Spare your friends, Max Barlow, fur friends are scarce."

The voice was familiar, but Barlow stood in uncertainty until the speaker came nearer, and he saw the blooming face of Sharpshot, the scout.

"You and a little picnic you've ben havin'," was the genial observation.

"How in the world did you get here, Sharpshot?" Barlow asked, in surprise, as he swung the sharpshooter's hand.

"How a low breath."

"I'll be shot if I skeerfully know," he answered.

Just then the voice of Abram Somers again arose, impatiently inquiring the cause of the firing, and Max turned toward the window.

Explanations ensued, and Somers was told how near he came to seeing his whole family in trouble; after which the scout related his story.

When Max left the battlefield with Keeler and his men, the sharpshooter was not ignorant of the state of affairs. He had prepared himself, and when the fight broke out and rode on his horse, mounted and hung as closely on their rear as he dared.

Before the village was reached, however, and while going at full speed, his horse fell with a broken leg and left him on foot; but, as the idea was discouraged, he played the pedestrian so well that he reached the Somers' cottage almost as soon as they.

"So it was that old the firing in the wood," said his wife, "and the revolvers." But Max was convinced that he owed a good deal more to him than his modest retort would indicate. Few men would care to take so long a journey for one almost a stranger, who passed in which the scout risked his life in the Confederate camp was astonishing.

Such were the views he expressed; but Sharpshot only laughed.

"Nonsense," said he. "Why should we be frightened of a sudden just because we are tight in the white enemies of the old flag instead of Japsus? What I did was nothing."

Both men entered the house. Oliver and Lena had retired early, but the ring had been left behind, and they at once appeared.

Oliver met Barlow in a manner which pleased him greatly. They were to join their fortunes in life some day, if they lived, and was not one to stand on ceremony or lack modesty.

Lena stood looking at Sharpshot, who had removed his hat and thrust it under his arm. There was admiration on his face as he looked at her. Lena, and when Max turned from Oliver and introduced him all around, he took the hands of the ladies as though they were something inexpressibly precious.

"Handsome as Pocahontas herself, they be," he said after a while.

An hour passed in rapid and important conversation. The dwellers of the cottage were told of the peril from which they had so narrowly escaped, and Barlow urged an immediate removal to the village, where

they would be a trifle safer than in the lonely dwelling.

To this they at first objected, but Sharpshot sided with his companion and they carried their point.

While they talked Max frequently looked at Lena and thought of Edgar Peterson. She showed no signs of sorrow that he had expected, but occasionally a look of sadness settled on her fair face, and he suspected she was thinking of the tragedy in the wood.

The matter ended in the closing of the house, and the party retired to the village together, where Somers sought shelter for himself and daughters in the house of a friend. Max urged them to go to St. Louis as soon as possible, and so get entirely clear of the dangers of war, and they promised to consider the matter.

Morning was near at hand when our two friends set out on their return to the army. A horse had been found for the scout, and they went in good condition.

Keeler and his band were not again seen. The Union army, despite the fact that it had fought so bravely, found itself in no condition to hold the disputed territory. The command had involved great risk, and the next week after the death of Lyon, and he decided to evacuate Springfield and move to a safer place.

His successful retreat to Rolla is a matter of history, and though Mr. Calhoun claimed a victory, Wilson's Creek, he made no attempt to capture the rich train which went under the army's protection.

When Rolla was reached, Barlow prepared to keep his word to Fremont. He started with Lena, accompanied by Sharpshot, who said he, too, wished to see the general, and they arrived there in due time.

The captain remembered his adventure when last in the city, and, indeed, if he could see anything more of his mysterious assailants. Sharpshot was of the opinion that the attack had been nothing more than one of city braves, but when the letter was considered, he was wholly at fault.

It had come from a friend, his identity was well concealed.

Barlow reported to General Fremont, and heard the project to which the general had referred on the previous visit, and that he was proposed to form a command something after the style of the Old Guard of the great Napoleon, and this command was to act as a body-guard for Fremont. They were, however, to be something more.

War was gathering force and venom throughout the South. The people of the states which had seceded from the Union were arming everywhere, and as matters then looked, hard fighting seemed in store for the remainder of the flag.

To meet this emergency, only a comparatively few regular soldiers were to be found in the United States. The remainder of the defenders must be gathered from the people, and the majority of them knew very little about war, the use of arms, or the proper handling of forces when in the field.

Many officers, too, must be chosen from among these inexperienced patriots, and, whatever thing else, the true soldier is only formed by a complete knowledge of military matters coupled with experience. Hence, another reason for the guard.

In forming the command, it was proposed to select a number of men of good character and sufficient intelligence to act as officers if ever occasion demanded. They were to be carefully and thoroughly drilled and made into perfect soldiers as soon as possible. The companies and regiments were formed, and officers were needed, they were to be taken from the guard, which would then be kept intact in numbers by enlisting others, and they, too, were to be drilled.

Such was the plan of Fremont and his friends—to have a small but select cavalry troop, perfect in all things that go to constitute the soldier, and with such men capable of assuming responsibility when occasion required.

In putting this plan into effect, the Pathfinder turned to one man whose past experience and soldierly qualities made him especially fitted for the work of forming and perfecting the new organization.

This man was Charles Zagonyi.

As has before been stated, he was a Hungarian, and had seen active service in the army of Bora when all the inclinations of a soldier, he had added experience to his natural gifts, and stories of his dashing valor had drifted across the water to the country to which he turned for refuge from political reasons made him an exile from Hungary.

So, to Major Zagonyi was given the duty of forming and drilling the guard, he to act as its leader when once organized.

This scheme had been working when Barlow first saw Fremont and Zagonyi at St. Louis, but the plan was not then formed. On the occasion of his second visit, however, all was explained to him, and he was given a choice between a captain's commission in the regular volunteers, or a position in the guard. If he chose the latter, he would be no more than a private, perhaps, for so small a force did not afford room for many officers.

Still, he did not hesitate. The idea of the organization thrilled him. He remembered the tales of Napoleon, and believed that American soldiers were equal to French; he was fascinated by the idea of being near Fremont, whom he so greatly admired; and toward Zagonyi he was drawn by that unspoken bond which is between brave men.

He made his choice, and became a member of the guard.

Then followed drilling which would have broken the heart of less hardy men. Early and late Zagonyi had his command at work. Beginning on excellent material, he pushed them rapidly. Good riders at the beginning they were made better by the drill, and how they were drilled on various weapons; and in drilling they were made remarkably perfect.

The guard belongs to history, and we will not tire the reader with an account of its work. Suffice it to say, the work went bravely on.

And while they worked, Fremont was only awaiting for guns, men and other necessities to push forward against the Confederates, who were riding rough-shod over the greater part of Missouri.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE PASSAGE OF THE OASIS.

It was not until the last of September that Fremont's army was ready to move. Even then, it was not what the general wished, but he had used all the means at his command, and his men, as strong as strong, were beginning to be heard for an advance on his part, and he prepared to go forward with what he had.

Several Confederate armies were in Missouri. General M. Jeff Thompson had abandoned that field of operations and gone to Arkansas, but Hardee was at Greenville, Pillow at New Madrid, and Price, who had besieged and captured Lexington, held that post. Guerrilla bands, prominent among which was that of Jeff Thompson, roved here and there, and Keeler's work was frequently seen as he and his rough hand dashed about with no authority but their own lawless wills.

The guard was to accompany Fremont's army, and, of course, Barlow was to be with them. His soldierly qualities had so recommended him to Zagonyi, that he was already a sergeant, which was about as far as he had made through the ice and snow of the Rocky Mountains.

Every day was increasing his admiration for Fremont and Zagonyi. The guard he considered was a new, to estimate by any way, he had made through the ice and snow of the Rocky Mountains.

During this interval, he had seen or heard nothing from the guard, but he had attacked them, and, having decided that they were no more than braves, he had almost forgotten the circumstances in the excitement of the new life.

Occasionally, letters came from the Somers, fairly through letters from Oliver, though many she wrote never reached him. He had urged them to take refuge in St. Louis, but Mr. Somers was mildly obstinate and would not leave his village. Since that time, but no letter had been heard for some reason given the place a while back.

The passing days had thrown no light upon the fate of Edgar Peterson. From the time he was left hanging by the trees, he had been completely vanished. Knowing how Lena was sorrowing over him, Barlow hoped to some day meet Sam Siles, who had led the mob, and square the account.

As the Union army was at last on the road. Composed of twenty thousand men, of whom five thousand were cavalry, it was divided into five divisions which were commanded by Generals Sigel, Hunter, Pope, McKinstry and Canby.

Marching in a course along the Missouri river, the army reached Jefferson City on



September 23, causing Price to evacuate Lexington, which place he had held since wresting it from Mulligan.

Freemont pressed on, and somewhat more than two weeks later reached Warsaw, where he was stopped by the swollen waters of the Osage River.

After being at the advance, crossed the stream by swimming his horses, but the heavy guns must necessarily have a different footing for their passage; so, there being no help for it, the army halted to build a bridge.

The forests presented the risk of the ax echoed instead of the voice of the rifle, and everything was done that was possible to expedite the work.

At this point came a rumor that a party of Confederates were hovering about the southern banks of the Osage, presumably as spies on the movements of the Unionists, and Sergeant Barlow was directed to take twenty of the guards and investigate the matter.

They swam their horses across the river, and, striking harder soil, set off on the venture.

A hardy and noticeable lot of men were there who followed our hero. Great care had been used in selecting them, and with their fine faces and forms, their dress a simple one of undorned blue, no one could have found a fault in their appearance.

Not long had they been on the way when they were overtaken by Sharpshot, who bore a brief note from the Pathfinder. It simply said that, at his own request, the scout had been added to the party.

Barlow was somewhat at a loss, for he had learned to trust the man and believed in his sagacity, and once more they went forward.

Their attention had been directed to a small village eight miles south of the Osage, and they were not long in reaching it. No enemy had been seen on the way.

Just to the north of the village was a hill of some elevation, and as they arrived at the top, Barlow halted his men and looked down at the houses and the streets.

All looked peaceful and quiet, and he was beginning to think that no soldiers were there when he caught sight of an old, familiar figure in the middle of the village.

He had seen something very much like that before, though he might be mistaken; he believed it was the reflection of a light striking on a bayonet. Bayonets, however, when they were stuck on a rifle, the glimmer was doing, usually have a man near them, but in this case nothing was visible.

Only for a moment was Max at fault. The glimmer, which was composed of several points, went slowly along the street, and he soon suspected that there was a bank of earth near it, just high enough to hide the men, just low enough to reveal the bayonets.

"One or ten soldiers, I reckon," thought the sergeant.

He had hardly arrived at the decision when the party emerged from cover and he distinguished several men in Confederate gray marching along in good order.

Sharpshot looked at his leader anxiously. That look seemed to ask permission for an immediate charge, but Barlow desired more time.

He watched the enemy. They marched forward for nearly a hundred yards and then halted in front of the largest private house in the village. Then one, who bore a sword instead of a musket, walked to the door and applied the knocker.

It was opened, though Barlow could not see by whom; a brief pause ensued; and then the officer entered the house and the other men marched around to one side, where, in our hero's line of view, they were the watchers, and all were out of sight.

All this was of interest to Barlow. He slowly turned to the sharpshooter.

"What do you make of it?"

"Oh, then was thatter we are huntin', sure enough," was the reply.

"A few more questions: Do you suppose there are any more in the village? Why do you suppose they are gone to that house? Are they worth catching?"

"I opine that are only them, an' it's my idee they are among friends. Mebbe, the owner of the mansion is goin' ter give them a ride. Ef they 'ad more o' the kind 'round hyar, it would be a proper good idee ter gobble them. Seeh are my sentiments."

"You touch hard-pan every time, Sharpshot. I am inclined to think you have told the whole truth, and applied the knocker. I think I will leave you all here, while I go on a scout, and learn if there are really any more men about the village."

"Seh's my part o' the work," said the scout, eagerly.

"Just as you say; I'm too lazy to object.

A way you go, and we'll wait for you here."

So the scout, who was clad in the buttoned-colored garments which told no tales, walked quietly away, and Max drew his troopers a little back out of sight and waited.

Half an hour later, Sharpshot returned. He had not seen a soldier during his absence, but he had heard it said that Mr. Yeaton, the owner of the mansion before observed, was entertaining a dozen Confederates in his house.

Barlow's resolution was quickly taken. He again moved his men, and they moved from the hill down into the village.

Their arrival created some excitement among the people, and, while many came boldly out to view the others were not so bold, and every door and window was filled with these more timid observers. Quite a number of hardy men were visible, for Missouri had many men not then in arms, but the greater part of the inhabitants seemed to be women and children, with a generous sprinkling of dogs.

All were anxious to see the Union soldiers. No hostility was shown them. Some black folk, who viewed the others were not so bold, but Barlow shrewdly suspected that half the people were friendly to the cause of the Union.

Without addressing any one, the guard marched to the mansion. Not a person was visible. It had been expected that the common soldiers of the party they had seen would be outside, but they had either entered the house or were at the main property.

Directing his men to surround the house, and allow no one to escape, Barlow rode near the door, dismounted, and applied the knocker.

Not fully on the heavy door. He waited patiently for a response, but none came. Again he knocked. Once more all was dead silence inside the house. Outside, the members of the guard sat quietly and awaited the result.

For the third time Barlow raised the knocker, and this time he sounded a double summons. The proverbial third attempt produced a result.

An upper window was thrown open and a gray-haired negro looked down upon them.

"Who dar?" demanded the man.

"My friend and brother," said Barlow, with a sudden rush of facetiousness; then, more earnestly: "I want to see your master."

"He am not in, sah."

"Open the door, or I'll burst it in!" shouted the angry Unionist, at the same time emphasizing his remarks by a kick at the unresponsive door.

"Ol' on! dar, hol' on!" cried the negro, in alarm. "You spile de paint, sah. I'll let you in, but dar am no sojers here. Jest you see fur yourself, sah."

#### CHAPTER XVI.

##### BARLOW GETS INTO TROUBLE.

The window closed, there was a period of silence, and then a shuffling of feet sounded beyond the door. A key was applied, the lock clicked as it shot back, the door swung open, and Barlow again saw the old negro.

He was a dilapidated looking old fellow of advanced years and evident bodily weakness. He looked at the white man with a pale face, was unable to decide whether he was an honest man or a rogue.

"Fore de Lord!" he said, "I hates awfully to let you uns in. Ole massa will skin me alive."

The Unionist was on the point of reminding him that beauty was but skin-deep, but he checked the unkind remark and substituted another.

"I am so sure that your master is away. You look like a philanthropist and scholar, but your ways are dubious. I'll prove your veracity by searching the house."

Seven of the guard, besides Sharpshot, were just outside the door, and a motion brought them inside. The venerable negro held up his hands in horror at the prospective sacrilege, but his period of remonstrance was over.

Barlow went about his work systematically. The house was composed of two richly furnished flats, a rough attic, and a spacious cellar. All these places were examined, one by one, but no human being was found.

The aged negro seemed to be the only occupant of the house.

So the house was searched, but that was simpler than the first, and offered no possible hiding place.

Barlow began to be interested. He knew that, since the war began, many of the citizens had manufactured secret nooks where they could hide from a Federal man, and he believed such to be the present case.

Possibly the Confederate soldiers had slipped away, but he believed they were still about the premises.

"I understand how you're greeting the negro, 'you have been deceiving me.'"

"No, sah; dat is not so. I is only a poor ole niggab, but I is a gentleman ob my word. Dar is no sojer-man hyar, an' dar was no noboddy hid in de house."

The assertion was stoutly made, and the man seemed anxious to be believed.

Still, Barlow was not convinced. Matters seemed too clear for doubt, and he would have been willing to bet that the house had a secret room, or that a second cellar adjoined the first.

"Lead the way to your master's library again," he said.

"Fore de Lord? you ain't gwine to tech de books, is you?" the man asked, in alarm.

"Not to any great extent. Trust me, uncle, and you will find me solid. Lead on."

The man led the way to the library, but Max cut him short. He remembered that when they first visited the place he had looked in to see only book-laden walls and scant furniture, but the place deserved closer inspection.

And the slave's opposition only went to increase Barlow's suspicions.

Slowly the negro led the way to the library, and they entered. Barlow paused and looked about him.

As has been said, the room was simple in all except its display of books. These were numerous. Shelves ran around and around the walls, and every niche was packed with books. The floor was covered with the largest private library our hero had ever seen.

The furniture consisted of a writing-desk, a table and three chairs; the walls were modestly papered, and on the floor was a rich, yielding carpet, curiously figured with large squares and small scroll-work between.

All this seemed simple enough, and more like the den of a student than that of plotters, but Barlow had come to test the question.

Going to one of the shelves, he saw before him copies of Shakespeare, Milton and their class, while just above were the heavy scientific works of the great thinkers of the world.

"Don't touch de books, sah," said the negro again.

The sergeant did not answer. He made a circuit of the room, sounded the walls where he could, and reflected somewhat. He looked wise while doing so, and the black man must have been deeply impressed.

Still, he was soon obliged to confess to himself that there was no sign of a secret room, nor any other hidden place.

The mystery grew deeper.

He began to feel angry, and inclined to make the negro tell the truth. He turned toward the old fellow with a frown on his face, but it was fated that he should never press the question.

As he turned, the walls began to move, unless his eyes deceived him, and then he experienced a strange sinking sensation. All this happened very quickly, and he thought that he was attacked by dizziness, a strange enemy for stout Max Barlow; but, following close on the heels of these rapidly passing thoughts, came the realization of the truth.

A portion of the floor was sinking beneath him.

When he fully perceived this, he threw out his hands in an attempt to grasp something solid, but only empty air was within his grasp.

It must not be supposed that all this had been slowly done, and that Barlow had stood still and let the floor sink slowly beneath him. Every reader knows how rapidly and oddly things happen when the floor is falling; and, though the sergeant had experienced so many ideas, they had all passed like a flash.

The portion of the floor sank quickly and surely, and then Barlow shot downward.

A strange sound was heard, and around him he saw a dark opening.

He had entered a room which was twenty feet square and well lighted, but the only furniture was composed of two chairs; the floor and walls were of heavy planks, and nowhere was there a sign of a door.

He did not see all this at first glance, for his gaze at once became fixed upon a man

who, with himself, made the sole occupants of the room.

This man was most peculiar in his appearance. Of middle age, he was rather below the average size, but his frame was compact and sinewy, and age had not seemed to decrease his strength and activity. His face was thin and dark, he wore a long mustache which pointed back toward his ears, and a long goatee, both of which were coal-black and added to his peculiar appearance.

His eyes, however, were his most remarkable point of interest. Large, black, sparkling—they had a glitter and wildness which might have come of anger or mental disturbance.

Even then, Barlow thought how much he looked like a French sword-master he had once known in St. Louis, but little time was given for reflection.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the unknown, while his open lips showed snow-white teeth which looked ominous, somehow. "You take a strange way of entering my abode, but I am right glad to see you."

"And who the dickens are you?" the astonished soldier demanded.

"Don't you know me?"

"No."

"Well, I might claim to be Cicero or Plato, or Alexander the Great, but to come right down to business, I am named Yeaton, and am the owner of this house."

"Ah! I have been looking for you."

"Well, you've found me, haven't you?"

"Yes."

"Are you satisfied?"

"What more do you want?"

"I have found one secret room, with an occupant, and now I want to find another. I want the soldiers you have concealed here."

"Go and find them, sir."

The man spoke with all the calmness in the world; but as Barlow looked around, he saw only the plain in his walls. There was no sign of a door. He looked back at Yeaton, to see a sneering smile on his face.

"You will first have to explain your trap to me," the soldier bluntly said.

Easily and quickly done. I have no intention of holding you in with mystery. I am a Southern man and true to the cause. My whole life and hope is bound up in the grand struggle my fellow citizens are making for liberty. I am fighting for this, I love this, and hate those who uphold the old. Believing that war would, sooner or later, surge around this region, I had a secret room made for a place of refuge. Here it is! You have called it a den—how do you like it?"

"It is well enough for you," said Barlow, dubiously.

"Ah, but you don't like it! Good! You have cause to dislike it, for it is poison to all of your faith. Now, I'll tell you more, but they cannot be found. I concealed them when I saw you coming, and then, myself, retired to this den, leaving Pompey to do the work above. But, young man, you were too inquisitive, and that is why you are now a prisoner in my den."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### A FIGHT WITH SWORDS.

Barlow was beginning to recover his wits. The fall he had received, coupled with the encounter with this strange man, had for the time bewildered him somewhat, but as his senses began to clear, he was accompanied by anger at finding himself in such a situation.

"Am I a prisoner?" he demanded, in answer to Yeaton's last remark.

"My opinion is different. With my weapons in my hands and a score of soldiers outside, I consider myself master of the situation."

Yeaton's eyes flashed with new wildness.

"Ha, ha! You never made a greater mistake, young man. You are like a silly fly in the web of a spider. Very likely you think my den no more than a romantic whim which—"

"On the contrary, I know of others—" "Wait. You know of none equal to this. The trap through which you fell is in itself a marvel. See! The door has sprung back of its own accord, and if only your soldiers were in the room above, he will suspect nothing. Did you notice that the carpet was marked in squares? One of these is just the size of the trap-door. The latter falls, the piece of

carpeting goes with it; the door springs back, and the square of carpet fits its place. Is that cunning, or not?"

"It's cunning," Barlow admitted.

"It snacks of the tricks and traps of the Middle Ages, but it is all in earnest. Young man, when you, or any other fellow, were doomed. You are now the same as dead. Under one of these planks I will inter your remains, and no other person will ever know what became of you!"

"You speak of a crown most terrible and unnatural. His eyes glittered like coals of fire, his parted lips revealed his teeth, his expression was like that of Mephistopheles in his sneering, triumphant mood.

"One thing was certain—the man was as crazy as any lunatic in a straight-jacket, and he would have to be dealt with accordingly."

"I object to that part of the programme," he coolly said. "You must not saddle a horse you can't ride. Mr. Yeaton. I hate to interfere with your plans concerning the planting of your crops, but I prefer to be counted out."

"The smile vanished from Yeaton's face.

"We shall see," he said.

He strode to the shelf on which stood the lamp which lighted the room, and from its further part produced a sword. He rested it on the plank floor, and from it drew its wondrous material by bending it almost double.

"You are to fight against that sword," he said. "You guard, and you cannot break it; I will soon convince you that you cannot pass my wire, and if it comes to a question of strength of wrist, I will surprise you. Draw!"

Barlow was not reluctant. He was tiring of the delay, and anxious to rejoin his men. He drew his own sword with a spiteful hiss as it rubbed along the scabbard, and threw himself into the easy position of a practiced swordsman.

"This is to be the death," said Yeaton, who had suddenly grown calmer.

"To the death be it," retorted Barlow, inwardly vowing, even as he spoke, that the man should live to guide him from this pen of his mad brain's creation.

Yeaton moved forward and looked his opponent fairly in the eyes. In his own black, glittering orbs was still a strange fire, and Barlow felt that he was looking into madness. He was mentally deranged. Before that glare, one less strong of mind than himself would have quailed, but Max Barlow had looked into the eyes of a forest panther just before he had leaped on his prey, and he was not one to tremble before man.

Still, he saw how perfect was Yeaton's position, and suspected that warm work was ahead.

The latter began the attack, and the weapons crossed with a spiteful clash. Thrice, Yeaton struck heavily, then made a cunning feint, so closely followed by a lunge that, as Barlow passed it off, one of the buttons of his shirt was wrenched.

His opponent smiled grimly. Self-confidence, and a complete belief in his destined triumph were expressed in that smile, but Max did not waver. His narrow escape from the United States army, and the fact that he had met a skillful foeman, he put every nerve into action.

Yeaton pressed the fighting. His movements were quick and the acme of science. His hand moved easily at the wrist, and his strokes were bewildering. He drove Barlow slowly around the room, and with feint and thrust strove to ship through his guard.

Grand, indeed, was his work; but before the United States army, and the fact that he had met a skillful foeman, he put every nerve into action.

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Never before had Max Barlow been so hard pressed, and he knew that his life hung on a slender thread. At any moment the madman might penetrate his guard; while, on his own part, he was willing to confess he could not draw blood.

His only hope lay in his superior strength and youth, and these things, opposed to the unnatural prowess of a maniac, might not avail him anything.

It was a grand, but terrible, fight—a battle for life between two who were masters of every device known in the use of swords.

At last Barlow began to feel its effects. He had not spoken a word since beginning, but his breathing was not so clear as at first, and his head began to swim.

Neither could, by any law of nature, hold out much longer.

Yeaton's fury did not for a moment abate, and the other had good cause to remember that he had said it was to be a fight to the death.

The crisis came when neither of them was looking for it. While giving way, Barlow suddenly felt his belt strike against something. He reached back, and, making a grand effort, would have recovered his balance had not the madman, seeing his accident, sprung forward like a tiger.

He made a desperate lunge—one which Max barely parried, and the effort necessary to turn it aside completed the Unionist's misfortune, and he lost his balance entirely and fell to the floor.

Then Yeaton once more sprung forward, his sword ready for the fatal thrust, only to have Barlow raise himself on one elbow and parry his furious effort.

Then began another desperate struggle, this time with the odds all against our hero, but he held neither gain his feet nor in his present position, long hope to beat off the maniac.

It looked very much as though Zagonyi was destined to lose a sergeant of the guard.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE POOL OF BLOOD.

Meanwhile, matters bearing on Barlow's fortunes were transpiring outside and within the house.

When the sergeant went with the old negro to the library, he had left the remainder of his force inside, including Sharpshot, so far from the room with the trap that they heard nothing of what occurred.

Just outside the house, however, was one of the guard, who had been left to protect the front door. Other troops were near at hand, but he, only, stood near the building.

It was at least half an hour from the time when Barlow and his searching party entered, that the guard began to hear strange sounds. What occasioned them, and where they came from, he was for some time at a loss to know.

The noise was a little like the dull clanking of machinery, but though the soldier looked around to the four points of the compass, he could see nothing which explained their source.

He grew puzzled and interested, and carefully analyzed the sounds. As a result, he finally decided that they must proceed from the cellar of the mansion.

So far, all was clear; but, what caused them?

He listened further, and gained a sudden suspicion. Dull and muffled as the sounds were, he came to believe that men were fighting in some hidden, subterranean place.

Having arrived at this suspicion, he became anxious for the safety of those within; and when he saw Sharpshot through a window, apparently perfectly serene in his mind, he hastened to call to him.

The sharpshooter came, heard, was himself at first puzzled, but finally ended by falling into line with his companion's views. He, however, was at once alarmed. Unless the signs of fighting were cut off at once, Max Barlow was in trouble somewhere.

He turned and darted back inside the house.

"We've sat still too long!" he muttered, angrily—"and this is the result. The varmints are pinin' our sergeant hot, I'm afear'd."

Taking affairs into his own hands, Sharpshot sent three men to the cellar, while, with two others, he went to the front of the house. He knew Barlow had gone when he left him.

The apartment was unoccupied, and, as before, no sign was there of the treacherous trap; but up from the depths still came that



dull, clanging sound. It seemed to be directly beneath the library.

A man came up from the cellar to say that the clanging was to be heard there, but that it came from beyond the solid cellar wall.

"Bring an axe!" ordered the scout. The man darted away, but before he returned the clanging ceased, and all was dead silence beneath them.

"The fight is over," said one of the guard. "How has it ended?" asked one of the others, and a gloomy air which spoke plainer than words.

"Death to them devils if they have done the sergeant harm!" hissed Sharpshot.

The axe was brought, and, without hesitating, the flooring. The carpet was torn up, and the boards beneath found to be arranged in the same deceptive squares that formed the figures of the carpet.

Mad Yeaton had planned cunningly. Sharpshot, however, used his axe promptly, and soon made a breach in the floor. Two layers of boards he removed, and then, below them yawned a black hole from which came a faint light.

A lamp was then brought, attached to a cord and lowered. It went down something like twelve feet, and revealed a square room, the floor and sides of which were of planking, the floor being no carpeted.

Still it was evident that the fighting, if fighting it had been, had come from there, and Sharpshot resolved to investigate further. The secret den was in itself suspicious. Sharpshot was found and lowered, after which the scout and one other man descended. They looked about, but there was no sign of any human being except themselves. They rounded the walls, and found them apparently round all sides.

"Shoot me, if it ain't queer!" muttered Sharpshot.

His companion silently shook his head. A ripple came up to find any sign of Barlow or the old negro in the upper part of the house, and the fighting and its ending gave the matter a dark and ominous aspect.

"I'll burn the house down if he ain't found at the bottom of the cellar."

"And so burn the sergeant also."

"Sure enough; I didn't think of that."

The speaker looked keenly around the room. If there had been fighting there, it must have left some sign.

"Ha!"

Sharpshot uttered a cry, and strode to one side of the den. Upon the plank he had seen the foot of a man's boot, and the dull-white floor, and the sight aroused a suspicion.

"What is it?" the latter asked.

He strode forward, and then, after a brief survey, turned a pair of startled eyes on his companion.

"Blood!" almost whispered the scout.

Then they stood together over a dark, red pool of something which was certainly blood, and which looked terribly suggestive just then.

"They have murdered the sergeant!" gasped Sharpshot.

One moment's silence reigned in the den, and then the second man raised his head.

"Bring spades and picks!" he said, huskily, "and we will tear this place in pieces. It will never do to have men say that Zagon's guard was thus outwitted!"

Meanwhile what had become of Max Barlow? Had he really been slain and left his lifeblood on the floor?

We left him fighting the maniac, *aka* Richard Hill, resting on his hip and elbow, and only waiting off that furious attack with the utmost difficulty.

He believed that his last moment had come. He could not long hope to successfully oppose Yeaton while in that position, and he might as well see to it that he must still further his already rapidly waning amount of strength.

Still, he fought bravely, and as the maniac cut and slashed furiously above him, met each blow with admirable skill. If he could only regain his feet.

Acting on a sudden idea, he watched his opportunity, and made a thrust at the madman's legs.

His aim was good, and he felt his sword pierce flesh, but Yeaton did not spring back as he had expected. On the contrary, he merely uttered a curse and pressed the fight more hotly.

Barlow began to feel terribly weak. He was almost tempted to abandon the battle and meet his fate, but he did not yield to the weakness. He fought on.

Suddenly, however, the scene changed.

Yeaton receded from the front, and Barlow thought he had leaped back, but as the sergeant seized the opportunity to regain his feet, he saw the madman struggling in the grasp of a third man, who had seized him from behind and saved Barlow; but the movement had brought himself into a desperate struggle where he seemed likely to get the worst of it.

"Quick, here!" he said, to the sergeant. "Give me your help, but do not injure him badly."

Barlow did not recognize the speaker, but he hastened to his aid, and they united their strength against Yeaton. The result proved the unnatural prowess which madness gives to a man. Yeaton was a middle-aged man, who would weigh less than a hundred and fifty pounds, while both of his opponents were years younger and twenty pounds heavier.

Still, with these odds against him, the maniac made a long and desperate struggle, and when they finally succeeded in overpowering and holding him on the floor, they were like children.

Evidently the new-comer had been looking to the future, for he at once produced a quantity of cords which were wound around the madman until he was helpless.

Yeaton was then thrown to the eastern side of the room, manipulated the planks for a moment, after which they receded and revealed a narrow opening like a door. This done, he turned to Barlow.

"Let us hear him through," he said.

It was done, though Yeaton ground his teeth and looked the personification of fury. As they lifted him, Max saw on the plank a pool of blood, which had dripped from the wound in his leg, but it was no alarming, and a subsequent examination showed that Barlow's sword had merely pricked the flesh.

Passing through the opening, they entered another room, which was ten feet square. At one side stood a bed, and upon this they placed their prisoner.

The stranger closed the door, and, returning to the bed, looked sadly down at the maniac, who had grown calm if not reconciled.

The light was dim, but, despite this, it seemed to Max that he had seen this man before. Face, form and voice were familiar, but he could not place them. He was, however, prepared for anything, and he looked calmly off, while the man began to pass his hands over his forehead, and murmured, at the same time murmuring to him as though he had been a child.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE GUERRILLAS APPEAR.

The cause and effect of the stranger's singular actions were soon seen. Under his efforts, Yeaton at first struggled as though to thrust off a million tons of weight, and as his eyes lost their wild glare, grew gradually calmer, until, with his face peaceful, his eyes closed, and he seemed to be falling asleep.

Barlow silently watched. He was past being surprised. The place was like an old feudal castle, where all things possible were liable to occur. He would watch and wait.

As he sent the maniac down the dining, and his mesmerizer turned to the Unionist, "Do you know me, Max Barlow?" he asked.

"Have you seen you before, but I cannot place your face," the sergeant answered.

"You saw me at the Somers' cottage the night we tricked Keeler."

"Ha! You are Eaton."

"Eaton or Yeaton, it is all one. The latter is my name, but the boys did not catch the first letter when I joined the army, and I am known by the former. This man is my father."

He pointed to the maniac, but the calmness of his voice showed that he was not going to call Barlow to account for having engaged in the fight.

"As you have seen," continued Eaton, "we will still call him," the sergeant answered. "He has been slightly so for years, and has done no work, except to pore over his books. Since the war commenced, he has got worse. An ardent believer in the justice of the Confederate cause, he has gone wild over the desolation being wrought in the South, especially in Missouri. You have seen these underground dens. They were made under his directions, and are the creations of a madman. I was here when they were being constructed, but I little thought they would ever be used, and humored him in his whim."

"I am sorry to have drawn my sword upon him—"

"Don't mention it, sergeant. Of course you could not stand still and be cut in pieces. I say this assuming that he began the fight. Tell me about it."

Barlow obeyed. Eaton listened attentively, and then sighed heavily at the end.

"Poor father!" he said. "He deserves pity in his mental affliction. Now, a word of explanation to you. The soldiers you saw enter here are gone. They only stopped for a bite of food, and left, and the village before you came. One thing more, to explain how I came upon the scene when I did. I was in the house during all your search; but, with you to know the place, I easily evaded you, and when I heard the clash of steel, I hastened to the scene to end it. Now, Barlow, I am your prisoner. You have a score of men here, while I am all alone. Shall I go with you to your camp?"

Max looked at him with astonishment.

"Do you expect me to say yes?" he asked. "We are enemies of war."

"But not at heart. We serve under rival banners, but I would deserve hanging if I made you my prisoner now. No, Yeaton, you are as free as the air. You have saved my life to-day, and at the Somers' cottage you—"

"Helped to save one dearer to you than your own life," finished the Confederate, smiling.

"That is it, exactly. Now, you cannot expect me to be so base a villain as to make you prisoner."

"Have your own way, my dear fellow, but it is only right that I should tell you I have only been repaying a debt. You remember the ambush in the pass?"

"Yes."

"I was there, and a fall from the rocks knocked me senseless. When I recovered, one of your soldiers placed a knife at my throat, but I would have been dragged him back and administered a severe reproof. You saved my life that day, and I am not ungrateful."

"Then you are even. Your hand, Eaton!"

"Eaton," said Barlow, suddenly, "can you tell me who wrote the note that brought that ambush upon us?"

The Confederate hesitated.

"I am not sure that I ought to tell so much," he said, "but as it is a personal, not a national affair, I will inform you. Captain Keeler wrote the note, using information given him by Sam Stiles."

"Curse that dog!"

"He deserves more than a cursing; he ought to be hung by the heels."

"I see so much plainly. Stiles was in my band and knew our secrets, but he was a traitor and carried the news to Keeler, who wrote the note, and so you see, that note was in the handwriting of Edgar Peterson, and was signed by his name."

"Keeler is a cunning penman and imitated his writing."

"But what was the object?"

"Thereby hangs a tale. Unknown to you, Keeler has long been a suitor for the hand of Olive Somers, while Sam Stiles was equally infatuated with her sister, Lena. Neither man had confessed his passion, so you see, had no clew to guide you when you tried to think who might have committed the forgery. The pair of villains thought to remove both you and Peterson by their plot, and so you see, I am at the pass, with my tools, who was afterwards to leave the letter where it would be found, and raise a hue and cry after Peterson. See?"

Barlow descended, and he knew why Sam Stiles had led the Lynchers against Edgar. He hastened to ask if Eaton knew what had become of the victim of the tragedy in the wood.

"He is dead. Keeler found him hanging to the tree, and he was out down and buried by some of his men."

"Do you know this to be a fact?"

"Keeler told me so, and it was from his own lips I got the other information I have given you."

"Poor Edgar!"

"Let me say here, too, that I have never ridden with him since his capture, nor on Somers' cabin. His repeated villainies were more than I could bear. He is no true son of the South."

"Did he suspect you that night?"

"No. I fired only shot at him, and a revolver through my sleeve, and, as it chanced to graze my arm, he thought I had narrowly escaped death. But, captain, this talking

will not do. Your men will be worrying about you, and I am not sure but you are liable to be surprised by Confederates. How do we part?"

"As friends, and here. I will lead my men from the house and back to camp, leaving you all good wishes."

He glanced at the elder Yenton, who was sleeping serenely.

"I can easily care for him," said the son. "My control over him is complete, and when he awakes he will be as calm as ever. Go, now, and look for yourself."

At this moment they heard excited voices in the larger of the two dens, and opening the door, Barlow saw Sharpshot and his men, who stood around a pool of blood.

They greeted him with cheers, some explanations were made, and then Barlow bade Eaton farewell, and led the way to the upper part of the house and then outside.

Nothing was seen of the aged negro.

The men were called together, they mounted, and all was ready for the start. Barlow had recovered his self-possession and nearly all of his strength, and in his place of command he was actually standing with one hand pointing up the street.

"Look-a-thar!" he said,

Barlow looked, and then he did not need to ask the cause of the scout's words.

Up at the further end of the street he saw a body of cavalry, two score strong, and garbed on Confederate gray. More than that, they were coming down at a trot.

"Two to our one," said Barlow, coolly.

"I think we ought to tell that to the one, can't you, nothing by fighting. Face the other way, boys—forward, quick trot!"

The order was obeyed, and the boys in blue swept down the street. A series of shots came from the Confederates above, but they remained unanswered.

The village was small, and the members of the guard would soon have been beyond it, but they had not gone fifty yards when, from behind houses and other places of concealment, came a second body of Confederates, who systematically placed themselves directly in the road.

Being thus placed between two fires, Barlow looked for another avenue of escape. To the life of every member of Zagonyi's guard was a precious thing, and he could not afford to lose men by a brilliant but useless charge.

He looked to the north, but there, too, was a squad of troopers, and at the South a Confederate gray, all well-armed and mounted, and all drawing in toward the handful of Unionists.

It was an exciting and ominous situation, and they were hemmed in, and with only twenty men to oppose to at least six thirty count number.

It was a time, too, for prompt planning and equally prompt action, for, unless they were to surrender or escape, they must speedily cut their way through or be annihilated.

## CHAPTER XX.

### A DASH FOR LIFE.

Sergeant Barlow had no thought of surrender. It would never do for it to be said that, from the first formation, a portion of Zagonyi's guard had been cut off and captured without a blow in defense; while such a calamity would prove the death-blow to his own hopes during the war in Missouri.

"No! they may not escape," they must speedily cut their way through or be annihilated.

"Boys!" he cried, holding his sword on high, "we are going through those fellows like a hurricane. Remember we belong to Zagonyi's guard and fight like tigers. Let your battle-cry be, 'For Fremont and the Union!'"

The gallant fellows answered with a cheer. Brave were they as men were ever made, and each one was anxious for service—eager to win glory for their formation. The time consumed in telling of it; but, already, the Confederates were fast closing in and the decisive moment could not be averted.

Barlow gave a clear command, and the guard swept its way toward the North at their utmost speed.

This course had the effect of leaving three of the hostile detachments somewhat in the rear, but it would speedily bring them against the fourth, which was twice their own numbers; and that this party was not reluctant to meet them was shown by the

way in which it dashed forward to the encounter.

Plainly, the two forces would meet at full speed, and then, as the yell went up, then? Armed with sabres in their hands, and revolvers in their belts, it was plain that neither intended to use carbines just then; but with the force of numbers against them, the outbreak was not promising for the gun.

In dead silence they rode until near the enemy, and then a great shout pealed from their throats in tones of thunder:

"Fremont and the Union!"

It was a yell which might have sent terror to the bravest of the Confederates, but they were made of the same blood as the Unionists, and they sent back a defiant shout.

Then, going at full speed, the rival forces met.

The shock was terrible—the encounter was one which cannot be properly described. So many points might be touched upon, though none clearly, that we may well hesitate what ones to particularize.

When, in the throng, some horses were thrown down, and a few riders lost their seats; horses reared high in air, often striking out with their forefeet, and, afterward, viciously kicking with their hind legs, and sabers flashed brightly in the setting sun, revolvers cracked, and, above all, arose the deafening shout of the guard:

"Fremont and the Union!"

It was a terribly gay scene, for such met not only like heroes, but it was one too confused to be described. Men and horses were mixed together in utter confusion, and it almost seemed as though none would ever come out of that grapple alive. Things were so confused, there also, strange things sometimes happen.

One minute it looked as though every man must go down under the shock, the next, as though all were hopelessly engaged, and while at the further end of the street the rest of the confused knot, their faces toward the North, their sabers bent with blood, and their faces curiously streaked and spattered with black and red—the combined results of smoke and blood.

These men wore uniforms of Union blue.

Zagonyi's braves had cut their way through.

Stranger yet, all were there, though three or four were lying behind, and leaping into the saddles of Confederate horses they had secured to replace their own death-smitten ones.

Ay, the score of men had gone straight through Barlow, in excusable exultation. Though more than one gallant fellow in Southern gray lay silent in death on the ground.

Barlow's heart thrilled with joy. It was far more than he dared to hope, but the few divisions of the enemy were fast advancing and only awaiting a chance to fire without hitting their comrades.

"For Fremont and the Union—run!" shouted Barlow, in exuberant exultation.

It was an order not to be found in like words in any book of military tactics, but the troopers understood and obeyed. They gave their horses the spur, and away they went, this time with all the enemy in the rear.

Soon, bullets began to whistle around them, but the distance was too great for accurate shooting, and one man only could afterward show the effects of the shooting. He had received a scratch on his shoulder, the insignificance of which he afterward lamented.

Wounds, in the opinion of the guard, were an honor in such a cause.

Sharpshot looked around, waved his hand and shouted a defiant cry, and then he rode fairly gaily to the rear, for he was not desirous to let the Unionists escape so easily, and in a confused body the hundred odd men came sweeping after them.

Danger was not yet over by any means, but Barlow was full of life, and the sergeant knew what theirs were. In forming the guard, Zagonyi's supervision and care had gone so far that not a horse was accepted until he had personally examined his shoulder. The result had taken to the road leading toward the north, for, although it was not a direct course, the footing was good, and made accidents less likely to occur; and along this way they were now sweeping, and this which would have delighted Zagonyi.

Many of the brave fellows had wounds received in the hand to hand conflict, but they laughed at the flowing blood, and those who

had received no such marks of honor looked disappointed and troubled.

Was the Old Guard of Napoleon made of better stuff?

Two miles were passed at the same rapid pace, but, good as their horses were, it was plain that those of the pursuers were nearly, if not quite, their equal. They kept pressing closely and Barlow did not feel at ease.

More than this, he suspected that the enemy were of Keeler's lawless band. He had been unable to catch sight of the man himself, and he who rode at the front and directed movements was a stranger; but, just the same, our hero believed them to be of the same gang which had already given him so much trouble.

Their pursuit swept around a long bend in the road, and then started with apprehension. Directly in their path, half a mile away, they saw another body of graycoats. These men were moving about in a way which at once explained their movements.

An officer was directing sundry movements, and Max comprehended all immediately.

Their were of the same party then in pursuit, but, by riding across the fields, in a direct route, had gained the front, and, if appearances went for anything, were then engaged in forming an ambush for the Unionists, like the suspected party, the friendly

officer was directing sundry movements, and Max comprehended all immediately.

Up to this time they had not been seen by the ambushers, but as they galloped over a firm, wide prairie there was a sudden commotion among the Confederates; and then the ambushers, who were abandoned, and they came dashing across the field in a course intended to intercept the Union riders.

"Do they want ter get hurt?" demanded Sharpshot, as he nervously fingered his rifle.

"I could say their purpose was to do the hurting themselves," said Barlow.

"Will it work?"

"I reckon not. There are no more than forty men there, and if we don't make matters worse, it'll be a bad omen, I prophesy. We will give them a taste of lead."

He spoke to his men, and they looked to their fire-arms. They could shoot as well as ride and use sabre, these men of the Fathful Guard, and their movements were all in the line of business.

On came the Confederates, and it was evident they would be intercepted unless the enemy was given a check.

Sharpshot opened the ball. His long rifle went up to his shoulder, remained stationary for an instant, and then, as he pressed the trigger, sent a bit of lead on its mission.

Close on the heels of the sharp crack came an artillery crash, and the part of one of the Confederates. He reeled, clutched violently at the horn of his saddle, and then went to the ground in a heap.

The shot was a signal for the other Unionists. They began to fire, and the volley was seen passing over his man and pulling the trigger when it suited himself, and the result was more deadly than Barlow had dared hope.

The gray riders were heavily stricken. They tumbled off their horses, and one, and the front rank seemed shaken as by a tornado.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### ON A SCOUT.

The Confederates were heavily stricken, and they wavered and lost heart before that deadly discharge. Still, they were brave men, and he who rode at the front was seen giving orders of encouragement.

Sharpshot saw what was needed. He had released his rifle, and, once more glancing along the barrel, he covered the leader and fired. Seemingly, he never fired in vain; for, at the crack, the man went down in a heap.

The last calamity was too much for the other men. They pulled in their horses and stood in a body over their fallen leader, while the leader himself was seen waving his hand.

The pursuit was not yet past, however. The main body of the enemy was still thundering in the rear, and the course the fugitives had been obliged to assume was taking them to the sage, south of the station where their camp. The pursuit was continued, the passage of the river must be made an unpleasantly warm one, under the combined influence of lead and the rapid, swollen waters.

Barlow was never more in earnest in his



life. Thus far he had brought his command without the loss of a man, and he wished to report to Zagonyi with the whole gallant force at his back.

They rapidly neared the river, but not one of the boys in blue knew the country well enough to know the nature of the crossing they were about to undertake. They might strike the river where steep bluffs would prevent any passage whatever, or where the water ran so swiftly that their horses would lose headway and expose the riders to the shots of the enemy.

There only hope lay in chancing upon a spot where they could quickly enter the stream, and then meet only tolerably tranquil water.

Sharpsnot turned to Barlow as they neared the river.

"Sergeant, I have a proposition. I'll drop out o' line—hide, an' afterwards watch the Confederates at ease. Ef Zagonyi will come, cross the Osage just below the bridge, an' then I will join you, explain what the guerrillas, an' lead the guard against them. See?"

Barlow comprehended and was convinced. He said as much, and Sharpsnot looked for a chance to drop out of line unseen by the enemy. He was going to venture much, but Max had confidence in his sagacity, and spoke no words of caution.

The fugitives swept through a hilly wood, and the scout turned sharply to the left and made the cover of a large tree for being observed were good for, not only was the character of the ground favorable, but darkness was beginning to settle over the scene.

Barlow and his troopers went on, and the Confederates followed in the rear. The critical moment was near at hand. A hundred yards ahead rolled the waters of the Osage, and all depended on the nature of the river and its banks.

The sergeant looked eagerly ahead. A line of trees fringed the stream and kept him in suspense; but he began to feel sure that there were no bluffs.

Still on—the trees through the line of trees.

The Osage lay before them. In the rear came the pursuers. They knew the country better than the Unionists; and they knew, too, that their only hope lay in firing on the little band while they were crossing. Beyond the Osage they dared not go.

Half way across the Unionists heard a series of yells in the rear. Then the bullets began to patter in the water. They came from the southern bank, the fire showing red flashes in the gloom—all combined, made a picture worthy of an artist's touch.

Still, the good fortune which had all day been behind the little band did not desert them then. Through the shower of lead they went steadily, and the further bank seemed reaching out to meet them.

The growing darkness served to bother the men, and the same darkness served to add to the picturesqueness and wildness of the scene.

The wide river, tree-lined, the swimming horses and their riders, the grim marksmen on the southern bank, the fire showing red flashes in the gloom—all combined, made a picture worthy of an artist's touch.

Still nearer to the friendly bank—then the mounted horse touched land, and emerged from the water; others followed, and, amid another chorus of yells from the enemy, this time angrily pitched, and, amid a parting volley, the little band gained the cover. The Osage rose to meet them.

They turned in their saddles, sent back a hearty cheer, and then, without delay, disappeared among the trees.

Battled, the Confederates stood for a moment on their own bank, and then went sullenly back.

Wherever he may have been during the chase Keeler was then there. The guerrilla band was his, and his curses arose warmly as he led them away from the scene of their final failure. He had lost many a man by the day's work, and none of those left under his banner dared address him at that moment.

He led the band a mile back from the river, and encamped in a wood. Whether he was foolish enough to believe there would be no return movement against him, or whether he was reckless and careless, is uncertain; but he went into camp for the night, merely throwing out pickets as a protection against surprise.

They made their supper of food already in their hands. Then Keeler called one of his men. He came, and proved to be Sam

Stiles, our old acquaintance of lynching fame.

"Sam," said the chief, "you are a bold man."

"Wal, sorter," the fellow acknowledged, looking curiously at his leader.

"Lieutenant Mooney was killed to-day. You shall have his office on one condition."

"Name it."

"It is merely that you kill Max Barlow."

"Why didn't you do the deed to-day, if you hanker?"

It was a timely question, but the man's manner lacked respect. Keeler frowned, and a reproof trembled on his lips, but he thought better of it and swallowed his cholera.

There had no proper chance, as you well know. But, in regard to Barlow: You know my reasons for hating him. He is my rival in war and love. While he lives, I can hope for nothing with Olive Somers. If you will place him under the sod, I will make you my lieutenant."

Sam grinned like one who sees a joke of broad and expansive proportions.

"I don't hanker," he frankly acknowledged. "I've got a sore spot in my ribs to-night, which recalls a scene which occurred a few weeks ago in St. Louis. Two men, one with a red beard an' t'other with a black one, tried to get the best of a single man. He looked over his shoulder at their hands, an' then played his for all it was worth. Result was, I got a lead pill in my ribs, an' you had to scud for your life. No, I can't care to take care of Max Barlow. I'll do anything else you say, though, to prove my fitness for the lieutenantcy."

"The office will remain unfilled until Barlow is killed. Then the man who does the deed gets the office."

"Count me out altogether, then," said Stiles, with another uncouth smile.

Keeler glared at him angrily, but made no reply. Sam was never duly respectful to his superiors, and he had just been a piece of rascality together and might again hunt in pairs.

As Sam's words have shown, they were the mysterious night assaults of Barlow, in St. Louis, where they were operating in disguise.

Stiles had received a bad wound, but he managed to get away from the scene of the affray and, in due time, wholly recovered from the "sore spot in his ribs," as he called it.

Before further words had been spoken, two of the pickets entered the camp with a third man, walking between them. One glance was enough to show him a prisoner. He did not wear Confederate gray, and bonds were on his arms, though he walked boldly and held his head higher, if anything, than his captors.

Keeler started and thrilled with surprise. This man was no stranger to him, though he had never seen him until the beginning of the war. He had seen him first when, in the previous June, Croton and Jackson fought near Booneville, again during Sigel's battle with Jackson, and still again at Wilson's Creek; and he had often seen him skulking about his camp in an ominous manner.

The prisoner, whose he knew to be a Union spy, was our friend Sharpsnot, the sharpshooter. He had ventured too near the guerrilla camp and had been overpowered after a hard struggle.

"Hug!" said Keeler, "you here, my fine fellow?"

"As you observe, kumel," said the scout, coolly.

Sharpsnot spoke with a blandness which was admirable, but he knew very well that he was in a close corner. Keeler was a man who never practiced mercy, and a spy never gets any too much of the article, whatever may be the creed of his captor.

Sharpsnot, however, was resolved not to play the coward.

"I suppose you were with Barlow to-day," answered the guerrilla. "You hang around here at night, and probably you are trying to absorb style from Fremont's high-toned guard."

"That same guard will some day absorb your whole gang, head and heels."

"You want to meet them," said Keeler, boastfully.

"They would swallow you at one mouthful. You don't know Zagonyi. See that you do not get acquainted with him."

"Enough of this talk; I am going to deal with you while I have a chance. Stiles, bring a rope."

The man stalked away, followed by a sarcoptic scold from a free prisoner, but soon returned bearing a rope. It was noosed

over Sharpsnot's head, and the loose end dangled over the branch of a tree.

"Now," said Keeler, "if you have any prayers to say, they will fit in well right here."

"That's a matter between me and One you don't know," said the scout, still calmly. "You pull your oar and I'll pull mine."

"We pull ropes here," sneered the guerrilla.

"Then, pull away."

The words were spoken calmly, rather than defiantly, but they stung Keeler, and he gave the signal.

The men at the rope pulled sharply, and Sharpsnot went up and hung dangling in mid-air.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE MARCH OF THE GUARD.

Barlow led his men at once to the Union camp. The work on the bridge was progressing at all hours, but the end was near, and the leaders hoped to cross the following day. As the scouting party came in, they passed impromptu wooden hauling logs, and every man had a horse for a more favorable time.

Max looked for Zagonyi, but, failing to find him, went at once to Fremont.

The great explorer and soldier was at his humble quarters, and with him, in close conversation, were Sigel and Zagonyi.

"Ah! Sergeant Barlow, is it you?" said the Pathfinder, looking up. "Major Zagonyi was just saying that it was time for you to return."

"They have been fighting, general—"

"And my boys—the guard—how did they acquit themselves?" Zagonyi quickly asked.

"Nobly, major. They have gone through many dangers successfully; and, while they have not lost a man, the enemy will be minus over a score at roll call."

"Brave fellows—brave fellows! Did I not tell you so, General Fremont? And not a man lost! Good! Good! But, sergeant, they surely had wounds?"

The Hungarian spoke anxiously.

"Two-thirds, at least, can show cuts and bullet marks, but no one will be incapacitated with but a single day. We cut our way through twice our number, and the guard dashed back the foe as a rock scorns the waves."

Barlow had dropped into bombastic language unconsciously, but it was done because he knew that Zagonyi's whole heart was with the guard.

"Brave men—brave men!" commented the major.

"I am proud of you, and of the guard," said Fremont, "but the result does not surprise me. I know the material of which that band is made."

"They are like the 'Old Guard,'" said Zagonyi, looking at the Pathfinder, and they never forget that they have their Napoleon."

"Don't flatter me, major; I warn you, do not do so," said Fremont, good-naturedly; then, turning to Barlow, "We will hear your report, sergeant."

Barlow gave a brief account of all that had happened, though reserving an account of the march to the river for a more favorable time. He also explained the latest position of the guerrillas.

"Ah!" said the Pathfinder, "I think we have a chance to strike them in turn."

"Let me hear your plan, sergeant," quickly. "I will take the guard and scatter their whole force."

"So be it, major; take what men you wish, and report to me on your return."

The Hungarian motioned to Barlow, and they departed together. Several minutes of activity followed, and then the guard, to the number of one hundred, was ready to march.

Zagonyi would have laughed at the idea of more being required.

The start was made, and they swam the Osage below the bridge.

Beyond the bridge, they hardly knew where to go. Max hoped every moment to see Sharpsnot, for he had promised to meet them on the way, but existing doubt as to what movements the guerrillas would actually make, and prevented any definite understanding.

The reader, however, knows that the sharpshooter was not in condition to keep his promise.

The night was dark, but the prophets among the guard expressed the opinion that the clouds would soon break away, and, when the moon arose, the weather and the night would be as good as day.

Having no better plan in view, they rode

toward where Barlow had last seen the enemy.

Zagonyi rode at the front, with Lieutenant Matheyi (like Zagonyi, an historical character) on his right, and Barlow on his left, and behind them came the guard.

A finer body of men had never crossed the soil of Missouri. In form and face they were unusually manly, and in training they were all soldier. Minor matters were left behind when the Pathfinder's guard donned Union blue.

Not far did they go in this compact order, however. Zagonyi had no intention of running into an ambush, so half a dozen scouts were sent out to examine the ground in advance. Barlow asked for and received permission to make one of this squad.

Barlow led the scouts to the place where Barlow's men had crossed the Osage under fire, one of the scouts fell back and reported that the guerrillas were encamped in a wood at the southwest, so away in that direction went the guard.

They approached the wood cautiously, though it was long, and the enemy were said to be at the further end. The policy of a good soldier is to be extremely careful when the enemy is needed, and when home for action comes, to go in with every nerve strained for effect; and Zagonyi was a master of the art of war.

Entering the trees, the major threw five men forward to feel the way, and the remainder followed as silently as possible in the rear.

Barlow was one of the scouts, and, as he crept through the bushes, he put into use all the ways he had learned during his career among the Indians, and his progress was remarkably skillful and noiseless.

As had been prophesied, the clouds were breaking away, and the newly-risen moon shone brightly at times. Its light, however, was feeble and uncertain, as dark clouds ever and anon crossed its face.

Still it helped the scouts on their way.

Barlow had gone a mile without seeing a sign of any party, foe or friend, when he experienced one of the most singular adventures of his life.

He had reached a place where there was a break in the trees, forming a little glade, and, as the moon shone brightly within, he paused at the edge of the bushes to look ahead before thus exposing himself.

Then it was that he saw a strange and startling sight.

At first he drew his revolver, for he believed that a man—a Confederate—was before him, but he did not raise the hammer. Instead, he stood like one paralyzed.

The object before him stood like a statue, and, though it was formed of flesh and bone, it had a deathly pallor about the face which was startling; and in that face, so like the dead, he recognized the features of Edgar Peterson!

At first the resemblance was perfect. In every way the strange object was like that unfortunate man, as he had appeared before Sam Styles led his lynchmen against him; all was natural except the death-like pallor.

Barlow stood dumb, with amazement and mystery on his face. He had never been a believer in ghosts, but at last he had unmistakable proof that the dead did sometime come back. Edgar Peterson was buried; he had been for two months unburied, and those who had crossed the mystic line, but there was his form, his face, all—in spirit shape.

To add to the terror of the situation, the eyes of the specter were fixed upon him with a steady stare; and, as the sergeant gazed, the creature put up one hand and made a motion as though to warn him back.

Just then a dense cloud swept across the face of the moon, and the glade was plunged into darkness.

After a full minute elapsed before the light again came, and during that interval Barlow was recovering his scattered senses. Whatever the object was, he must advance upon it.

A loud passed on, the light came again, but when Barlow looked the glade was vacant.

The specter had vanished!

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE SURPRISE.

On the heels of this last discovery came a rebellious feeling from the sergeant. A deathly pallor, he felt, he had never believed in anything supernatural, and with the fact that the object had gone, came a conviction that it had been no phantom, but a creature of flesh and blood.

Reckless of consequences, he broke from

cover, rushed across the glade, and entered the bushes at the further side. He glanced back, but there was no sign of any one, human or otherwise.

He searched thoroughly for several minutes, alarmed lest he had seen one of the guerrillas, and allowed him to escape, but he found that he was gone back to the glade and paused to reflect.

Who, or what, had he seen?

It was a hard question to answer, but as he remembered the face of the object, and how he had seen it, he grew more and more amazed.

Either the creature had possessed a remarkable likeness to Edgar Peterson, or else it was that man himself, in bodily condition or in spirit.

Bearing on the last question came a recollection of the deathly face and fixed stare of the creature, and for the first time in his life, Max Barlow began to feel a belief in things supernatural.

It was sure that he had seen Edgar Peterson, and, as he was said to be dead and buried, it followed that this had been his specter; and—reason for the appearance was needed; and when that it had made a motion to warn him back.

Had Edgar Peterson, because of their friendship in life, arisen from the spirit world to tell him that danger too great to be dared in the error of his way?

Barlow believed at that moment, but the warning, if one it was, fell on barren soil. The sergeant was brave and patriotic, he had a duty to perform; and all the danger in the world could not alarm him.

"Will you go on and think of this anon," he muttered.

He did as he said, and, pushed forward through the bushes, though he had lost so much time that he did not expect to be the one to carry news to Zagonyi.

In the meantime, the other scouts had gone faster than he, and as the guard marched slowly on in the wood, these men soon brought him information as to the exact position of the guerrillas.

Preparations were made for a charge through their camp. Had the wood been smaller, the major would have tried to hem them in by surrounding the place, but, under the circumstances, this would be foolish.

He must trust to a dash, fight while the enemy faced them, take what prisoners he could, and note the result at the end.

As has before been said, Keeler must either have been mad or foolish to camp as he had done. He had abused the temper of the Unionists, and since he was so near their lines, he should have known that he was running great risk to sit idly down; but more noted military men than he have made blunders equally grave.

Edgar Peterson's men on carefully. They moved slowly, for horses at a rapid pace make far too much noise for secret work, and chance favored them. Just north of the guerrilla camp was a place where the trees grew so sparse that grass had sprung up on the ground; and this made a carpet for the feet of the horses, and prevented noise.

At last, they had gone so near the camp that secrecy was no longer possible. Zagonyi arranged his men, and they only awaited the word to dash forward.

Barlow, though still confused, was doing his best to center his thoughts on the work before him, and, as he had been given command of the left wing, there was need of coolness.

Zagonyi had the center and Lieutenant Matheyi the right.

At last the word crept along the line, and the guard started.

They had spoken sharply to their horses, and no more was needed. The gallant animals sprang forward, and with a crash the battle was on.

There had not gone over three rods before the alarm was given. Two of the guerrilla pickets fired their guns, and then, as the guard swept along, dashed into the surprised camp.

Confusion seized upon the Confederates; they were about to pay the penalty of their recklessness, and that, too, against a foe who had no weak points.

Up to this time, the Unionists had seen nothing of Sharpsnot, but as they crushed forward the scout suddenly appeared at the front.

"Forward, you fiery, untamed critters, forward!" he shouted, swinging his rifle about his head. "Rush in, an' the day is yours'n, for sure."

Then he turned and sped along at the front, on foot, but as cool as ever.

At that time, the members of the guard did not know that he had lately been suspended by a rope, so his sudden appearance was not in the least remarkable to them.

The Unionists struck heavily, and their foes were ready to receive the shock. Some of them had gained the backs of their horses, and, hearing Keeler's order to stand firm, were reluctantly facing the guard; others, still on foot, had paused with their weapons ready, as they still were rushing about in wild confusion, and the fourth division was making the best of its way from the spot.

With this dilapidated force Keeler hoped to successfully oppose the Pathfinder's guard. The guerrilla was brave enough, and he had no thought of flight, so, with orders clearly given, he grimly set his face to the foe.

The shock came, and, like a resistless hurricane, the guard swept through the camp. The opposition was feeble. Men were in the way, men who were brave and ready to fight, but what force could present a decent front under such circumstances?

With enough of the men to turn their sabers the guard swept through. They left dead and down-trodden men behind them, but they were all wearers of gray. Scarcely a return blow had been struck.

Turning upon the guerrillas. They knew there was no chance for them to form under such circumstances, and, situated as they were, they could only expect to be cut down if they remained to fight.

Others, however, did not think of those who had first fled, and Keeler's voice fell on unheeding ears. He was trying desperately to stem the tide, but just then a stalwart Unionist attacked him, knocked his sword from his hand, and he had secured a prisoner then and there, and did not the rush of other men separated them.

Then the chief saw the guard turn about, saw his own men fling down their weapons and realized that the day was lost. He wheeled about, swung, applied the spur, and dashed away, saving himself by luck and the aid of the darkness.

The triumph of the guard was complete. One half of the guerrillas had surrendered, and the other half, though they had fought the band had been completely broken up, and this, too, without the loss of a man on the Union side.

A portion of the victors, under Lieutenant Matheyi, pursued for a short distance, but they had no desire to run into a trap, and, after a few minutes, they returned to the scene of the surprise.

Zagonyi had brought order out of confusion. His men were in perfect form, and the prisoners were ready for the march to the Union camp. Nothing remained to be done except to go, and they went accordingly.

Sharpsnot fell into line beside Barlow.

According to the day's sport, sergeant," he said.

"I think Keeler's hand is pretty well broken," said Max, exultantly.

"Reckon it is, for sure. It'll be a scant force that answers at roll-call to-morrow. If Keeler was not such a plucky critter, I should say very likely he would never lead another raid."

"But he will. He can find plenty of vagabonds and desperadoes to make up a regular army, and with these he will soon be in the field again."

"I had a leeble adventure ter-night, sergeant," said the scout, abruptly.

"I don't know," said the sergeant. Sharpsnot told the story of his hanging experience, and, from the point of interest, we will use his own words.

"Just as the critters got ready ter string me up, I heerd a voice in my ear sayin' how he wadn't so bad as he seemed, that he was a Union spy in disguise, an' that he would try ter help me out. So, sergeant, he got charge o' the rope business, an' I'll be shot ef, arter that, those wad put around my neck he didn't take ef an' hitch it around my shoulders instead."

"Didn't the guerrillas see him?" Barlow asked, in surprise.

"They seed him fumblin' about me, but they thought all right, an' it was so thunderin' dark that nobody seed the cheat."

"You may call the fact pure luck, then," said Max.

"Luck and providence, sergeant, the same which has befriended me more nor once in the war. It was the darkness that fooled the guerrillas."

"Well, but how did it end?"

"I stood there, mute as a monse, with the noise about my shoulders, when Keeler gave the word, then up I went in mid-air. Of



course the strain was not great, but I had a part for play, an' I played dead to save my life to the best of my ability, now you bet. I struggled as I thought a hagin' man naturally would, first desperately and then easily, lettin' up gradually until I hung with only a jerking of my heels an' a quiver of my body.

"It was a terrible test of nerve," said Barlow, shuddering.

"You can swear to that right along. I've been in many a tight place, but never one so close as that. I was in the bushes, but I did it, sergeant, an' I think I did it wal. At any rate I fooled the critters, an' as I hung there, nice an' easy, Keeler hadn't a suspicion but what I was hung by the neck until I was dead."

"And what came then?"

"He finally ordered me cut down, Keeler did, an' again my friend pushed himself forward. He cut the rope, felt of my heart, an' I had ceased to beat, an' no one appeared to dispute him. Keeler ordered the 'body,' as he called me, to be dragged away in the bushes, an' my friend said to that, cut my hands an' feet, an' throw away the blankets."

"They had dragged me heels first, but I never made a sign, an' when they left me alone in the bushes I was as satisfied as though they had left watchers."

"You didn't stay there long, I suppose?"

"You bet I didn't. I only waited a bit, an' then I arose, scooted out, an' jined your critters as they come down."

"And your rescuer?"

"He was a knacker, anything about him, but ef he is the boy I took him ter be, he has cared for number one. I think it was—"

"Sharpshot ended by pronouncing the name of a spy well known to Fremont's army."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### A CROSS THE OSAGE.

The guard reached the Union camp in safety, swimming the thief over the bridge-builders, and taking their prisoners into camp. Zagonyi reported to General Fremont, some further work was done, and then the tired soldiers sought their blankets. There was near morning before Max Barlow fell asleep. He had just gone through such a series of adventures that he had food enough for thought, but his mind dwelt more on the strange sight he had seen in the wood.

"Had it been a specter?"

Again and again he asked himself the question, but there was no satisfactory answer. He found it hard to believe with his firm and practical mind, to believe that such things could be, but the subject was one which baffled him at every turn.

There were three ways to look at the matter. Either he had seen Edgar Peterson in the flesh or his spirit, or else it had been a man who greatly resembled his old friend, Keeler had said that Edgar was dead and buried, but that the guerrilla was not a man of strict veracity.

He might have lied, and Edgar might still be living but, if so, why was his face so strangely pale? More like a ghost than anything else had the object appeared.

If it had been a person who strongly resembled Edgar, who was it, and how had he so mysteriously disappeared?"

All these questions, coming through his mind, Barlow awoke until nearly morning and rolled and tossed on his blanket.

The following day the bridge was to be completed, the Osage passed, and the march resumed. The delay had been vexatious, but it was one of the fortunes of war, and not to be avoided.

So, after Barlow turned out, he chanced upon Sharpshot and a man he knew to be the favorite spy of the army. It was his name the sharpshooter had pronounced on the previous night, and Max joined them, anxious to see if his suspicion had been correct.

It was as Sharpshot had thought. The spy, with the daring peculiar to his class, had entered the Confederate camp, and in the darkness, mixed with them unsuspected. Far had brought him and Sharpshot there at the same time, and by the use of great skill and bravery, he had succeeded in saving the life of the sharpshooter.

Barlow and Sharpshot wandered on together.

"Do you believe in ghosts?" Max suddenly asked.

"It was a question which would have given him a slight start, but the scout met it coolly.

"Sartinly," he answered.

"And you have seen them?"

"Three or four times. Oh? they are a little more than a sergeant; no doubt about that. See one yourself."

"No, but I didn't know but what I should, such strange things are occurring just now."

And then Barlow changed the subject, and the whole attention was given to the bridge as they arrived.

Our hero's mind, however, dwelt on his late encounter with annoying perseverance. He could not solve the mystery. He would have believed that Edgar Keeler was still alive, but, if it was so, why did he not show himself to one who would have been his friend then, as in the past?

Barlow reflected on the subject until he was tired and angry, and it was a great relief when the bridge was finished and the order came for an advance.

The army crossed, now thirty thousand strong, and carrying over eighty heavy guns, and away they went on their mission of war—their destination being Springfield, by way of Bolivar.

Not to dwell on the events of this march which would fill a volume in our story, let us go forward to an incident which occurred just as the army was nearing the Pomme de Terre River.

A scout returned to camp at noon, and, finding Barlow, handed him a letter.

"What is this?" Max asked, in surprise.

"I came upon a man a mile south of here, and he gave me that paper and asked me to deliver it to you. That's all I know about it."

The sergeant broke the seal, unfolded the paper, and saw writing in a bold, masculine hand.

He read the contents rapidly.

"MAX BARLOW—If you can get away from your post, it would be well for you to go at once to Springfield, in disguise. Olive and Lena Somers have been stolen from their homes. You can guess the author of the outrage. Keeler is not a man to stay whipped, and though the guard rounded him soundly that night, he has collected another force of guerrillas. His hand is the worst in the Ozark region, and even General Price is disgusted with him. The Somers sisters have been stolen—one for him, the other for Sam Stiles; and I will venture to guess they have been carried to Springfield. I am going there myself, and if I can and then I will. Such men as Keeler bring disgrace to the cause of love, and I will hate them when I can. Hope on, for I may aid the girls."

EATON."

So ran the letter, and though Barlow afterwards thought of the noble nature of the man who had written, he could just then think only of the peril which menaced the woman he loved.

Olive Somers is the power of Keeler! Good heaven! the knowledge was maddening. She, with her tender breeding and nature; he, a man to whom honor was unknown.

Barlow was almost wild. Only one thought was in his mind—to secure leave of absence and then hasten to Springfield. It must be done—he must go to the rescue of the woman he loved. All thoughts of the glory of the battlefield which he would lose were then gone—he thought only of Olive.

He was about to go to Zagonyi when he was summoned to that officer. He went and heard news which electrified him.

The guard had been ordered to march on Springfield.

At that place was a considerable force of Confederates, and the Pathfinder general had resolved to send a cavalry force composed of the guard and Major Wilder's "Prairie Scouts" to reconnoiter, and if they thought safe, to attempt the capture of the town.

Such was the welcome news which met Max Barlow as he reported at Zagonyi's quarters.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE PRISONERS.

Leaving Zagonyi and the guard to make that renowned march to Springfield, let us go on ahead and look after the fortunes of Max Barlow, who is in a running fight with the Confederates in a bad situation—Olive and Lena Somers.

The friendly Confederate had spoken truly when he said they had been taken by Keeler. The Somers, though considered a man of good commonsense in other respects, had persisted in remaining at the village in the face of all the warnings he had received, and the cowardly bandit pret that Keeler had designs against the peace of his daughters.

The result was what Barlow and others had feared. After Keeler had been frustrated in his first attempts he swept through the Ozark country and along the Osage until so severely handled by Zagonyi; then he gathered the survivors of his band, added

some new recruits, and one night descended on the village and kidnapped the girls.

Mr. Somers was left at the house with a wound which bade fair to keep him in the repair-shop for at least a month, which would give him time to consider whether he had acted wisely.

Having secured the girls, Keeler headed straight for Springfield, where he arrived at dawn the following morning. He made no conversation with his prisoners on the way, but explanations were not needed to show the girls that they were in extreme peril.

They were taken to a house near the center of the place and given in charge of a man and his wife who seemed fit tools for Keeler.

To that house, an hour later, the guerrilla chief came, accompanied by Sam Stiles.

Olive and Lena were surprised to see the two together, for the chief, despite his villainy, was a man of education and fair exterior, while they were a "poor white." They had known him well at their native village, had never liked him, and, since he led the lynchings against Edgar Peterson, their feelings were of a type which can easily be imagined.

Keeler bowed before them with grave politeness, which showed his skill in grim irony.

"I trust, ladies, that you are enjoying yourselves in your new home," he said.

"We do not," they answered, "but like an explanation," Olive said, quickly.

"Easily done. You already know that you are my prisoners, so I need not state that fact. My reason is next in order, and that may be quickly given. I am human, Miss Somers; I have seen and admired you, and it is my ambition to make you my wife. It was for that purpose that I brought you here."

Olive grew very pale and lost her composure for a moment. Lena, equally disturbed, turned her head away from the burning regard of Sam Stiles.

"The idea does not seem to please you," added Keeler, in the same bland manner.

"It does not, sir," Olive plainly said.

"And why not?"

"Because, sir, I have no desire to become your wife."

"Had an idea the wind would blow that way," said the guerrilla, yawning with assumed laziness. "That's why I stole you. Hence take it I didn't get enough sleep last night. Too much hard work in this business."

"Do you mean in the stealing of women?" retorted Olive.

"Well, that comes in as a part of my trade."

"I thought as much, sir. I have heard that you are really an outlaw; that the Confederate generals refuse to recognize you as a soldier, and that they deplore the fact that such men exist. I mention this to you."

Olive spoke with cutting bitterness; but Keeler remained unmoved.

"You must believe half what you hear. When General Price finds himself hemmed up in Springfield by the Union army, he will be glad to extend his right hand and let the tiger of the Ozark strike in his behalf. But we are wandering from our subject. Do you know why my friend, Stiles, appears in this case?"

"No."

"Because he, too, is in the field as a lover. He has felt the tender passion, and his heart is richly rewarded. He has been in the schoolboy for several weeks, has written poetry, and sung songs to the moon. He goes about in deep thought, and has lost a good deal of flesh. All for love! And, ladies, the object of his affection is Miss Lena Somers. Ain't that so, Sam?"

"That's the identical idea, cap'n," replied the ruffian, with a grin.

It was sport for them to torture and frighten the innocent and helpless girls, for they felt that the game was all on their own hands, but the pleasure was all on one side.

Poor Lena turned terribly pale as she heard Keeler's declaration. She lacked the outspoken bravery of her elder sister, and, though possessed of a good deal of latent courage, had not the nerve to hear such an assertion.

And what girl would have—"Sir," said Olive, with spirit, "why will you persist in insulting us?"

"Bless me," said the unmoved villain, in assumed surprise. "If I ever looked at it in that light. Where does the insult come in? I fail to see. It can't lie in the fact that two worthy young men are sighing and wooing





felt his heart throb in unison with these gallant fellows.

"You are here," Barlow added. "Why don't you turn back and you can?"

"Ten hundred horses couldn't drag me back," said the scout fiercely. "I will go on and conquer, and the war will be gained."

Barlow looked at him long and earnestly. Perhaps he was thinking that, not being of the band, the sharpshooter ought not to sacrifice his life; but no more words were spoken, and the war was begun.

Then Sharpshot broke the silence.

"I think, sergeant," said he, "that I have an idea where the girls are hid. If we once get inside Springfield, I'll try ten lead you to them."

"I fear that Keeler will take them and flee at the first opportunity," answered Barlow, gloomily.

"If we succeed, there is hope that the enemy will go so quick that they won't be time, an' you an' me will live our eyes open for this thing. I'm with you in the business, an', seem's as how Keeler once did me the honor to hang on to me, he'll be glad to get one or two good raps at him in return."

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE CHARGE.

The guard went on at a quick trot. Not much further did they have to go to reach Springfield, and they wished to move quickly, and make the enemy by surprise, if possible. When this is done, a small force will often put a much larger one to flight.

According to the observations made by Sergeant Barlow, the enemy must be in the center of the town, but the sequel proved that enough time had been given them to allow them to come out and meet the guard on ground more disadvantageous to the enemy's position.

The latter emerged from a wood, and saw before them a scene which would have dealt terror to hearts less brave.

A few hundred yards away, another wood lay in wait. In front of this second wood was a hill; and, in front of the hill, a hollow through which ran a merry brook.

Upon the hill, the ground could scarcely be seen because of the Confederates that were there.

The enemy's infantry was awaiting there to the number of twelve or thirteen hundred, while, a little to one side, four hundred troopers were seen.

And this army was drawn up in battle array to meet and crush the little handful of Unionists. Why they had come in such force, when half as many would have seemed to make victory certain, is not clear, but it may be they had a suspicion of the mettle of the guard.

"Can you go to Olive through them?"

Sergeant Barlow said, "I will try."

"Through a million of them, if need be," was the answer, quickly given.

"Many a man will never go through alive. See! we must charge through that narrow lane, across the creek, up the hill. At the creek, too, we must stop and take down that rail fence. No horse can jump it, an' while we work, the infantry will pour down the bullets on us. Then, if any on us do go through the ranks of the four hundred cavalry, let fall on our shattered ranks."

The scout spoke with perfect coolness, and it was evident that, though seeing all the dangers, he was not alarmed.

"We must go through the battle, we must not," said Barlow, fiercely. "We must carry and clear the town."

Zagonyi turned to his men.

"The man he said," when I recruited you, I said the body-guard was not for parade but for war. The enemy is before us, two thousand strong, and we are but one hundred and fifty. It is possible not one of us will come back, and any soldier here thinks the enemy too many, he need not go. Who turns back?"

Not one of the guard moved. All sat steadily in their places, their faces to the enemy, their eyes compressed to the size of a settled pipe on their grand faces. They were of heroic mold, and where Zagonyi led all were ready to follow.

At the look of defiance over the leader's face. As well as he thought of the guard, he knew it was not human nature for young soldiers to be so brave, and their calm heroism thrilled him through and through.

He turned to the infantry and said:

"We will go on," he continued, "and let your battle-cry be, 'Fremont and the Union!' Watch me well, and listen for orders, and we will teach the enemy to re-

member the body-guard. Draw sabers! By the rat flunk—kick two—march!"

At the word they started, a small but steady mass of Union blue, the guardians of the old flag. They were starting on a charge which has a parallel only in that of Napoleon's "guard of honor."

Down the lane they went, straight for the brook and the opposing fence, two hundred yards away, but not many rods had been covered when, all along the lane, shots began to come from the hidden Confederates and soldiers and horses dropped by the way.

The real foe was well beyond, and yet, the destruction was already beginning. Zagonyi looked back. His braves were riding with the coolness of veterans.

Amid this fire they passed the two hundred yards, and crossed the brook. Bullets came like hailstones. One passed through the sharrowhead's cap, another cut a furrow along Barlow's arm. Still, it would not do pause for these hidden sharpshooters; the real enemy must be reached and attacked.

They crossed the brook and reached the fence. It could not be leaped, and officers and men were alike eager to aid in removing it. Lieutenant Mattheyni cast aside a rail, and willing hands soon made a breach.

All this while they were being shot at. Firearms of various kinds were cracking on every side—it was a terrible baptism of fire, and, to many, a fatal one.

At last the fence was down, and the way was open for the final charge; but in the lane behind were dead men and dead horses. Out of the hundred and fifty, forty were unable to participate in the dash. Of these, all were not dead—the loss was chiefly in fallen horses.

The orders of Zagonyi rang out clearly, and the survivors formed. Their battle-cry sounded, and they started up the hill to meet the enemy.

Almost unconsciously, Barlow glanced at his companions. Their faces were stern and resolute, their lips compressed and their eyes gleaming. In spite of their losses, in spite of the danger before them, they longed for close quarters.

Up and on they went, their sabers gleaming in the sun, and as they charged their ranks rang out in the air with startling clearness. Zagonyi's afterthought was that their battle-cry sounded like thunder.

The most critical moment of all in the history of the guard was at hand. They were going to meet a hundred and twenty. For them, there could be no retreat. If they showed their backs to the enemy, few in number as they were, their fate was sealed.

It seemed a mad and hopeless venture—there could be but one hundred and ten, brave as they were, do against two hundred and thirty.

They will see.

The soldiers went at full speed, their shouts ringing forth as never those of "parade soldiers" had done, their front terribly ominous, few as they were; but the enemy must have laughed among themselves. Surely, these were but madmen coming to their death.

A bullet passed between Barlow's side and his arm, a man fell dead beside him, the fire was terribly hot; but he only gripped his saber the tighter and went on with the rest. He glanced at Sharpshot—the man was as cool as any one could be, but there was a look on his face like that of a hungry man.

Zagonyi was never so happy. He looked like a child who has found a treasure. And so it was, in his opinion, though death and destruction lay in their path. He already felt like a victor. The guard was following closely, and he knew it well—the Pathfinder's band would make themselves a name or yield up the ghost on honor's field. "Fremont and the Union!"

How the cry pealed out! How gallant looked the men in their ranks! They were forming a grand chapter in history.

The hill fairly bristled with Confederates. The twelve hundred infantry with the four hundred cavalry on the flank—all were awaiting the arrival, confident that they would be absorbed at one motion.

The hill was climbed, the intervening distance shortened—the guard hurled themselves at the foe.

Max Barlow grasped his sword tightly and plunged into the fray. A soldier reached out his hand to seize the horse by the rein and fell with a cloven skull. Then, striking right and left, the sergeant went on.

"Fremont and the Union!"

How the cry rang on the air, arising above all other sounds and thrilling those who uttered it. They uttered two names which

were dearer to them than their lives—for those two they risked the last.

It is interesting to note the battle. That little compact body of men seemed almost to disappear as they struck the overwhelming odds of the Confederates, but they were there and fighting gloriously. Their sabers bright with blood, their faces black with smoke and dust, but still they pressed forward.

The enemy could not stand before them. They were hurled back and were sharply followed. Dead and wounded covered the hill, and nearly all wore Confederate gray. The guard cut down everything that opposed them.

Barlow saw Sharpshot fighting with clubbed rifle. Not a word passed the scout's lips, but his work was terrible. He struck crushing blows, recovered and struck again. He was a hero among heroes.

Zagonyi was ever at the front. His potent sword, which had won renown on the battlefields of Hungary, was carving a way for freedom and the Union. The guard looked to him, as he had said, and followed where he led.

The Confederates recoiled. Just why it was so it is hard to say. They were brave men themselves, mostly of the same grade, and as the fighting was lacking to make them equal then.

It may have seemed to them that that little band was more than human.

Driven back, beset with such fierceness, the Confederates lost heart and turned their backs. The cover of the wood was at their rear, and toward this the infantry went at full speed, never pausing until under the shelter of the trees.

A portion of the guard had engaged the cavalry, and now all turned upon them. It began to look as though victory would be theirs, but the odds were still four to one, even greater than might almost be pardoned if the guard were the best military command would dare to engage.

"Fremont and the Union!"

With the old cry, the guard precipitated itself on the fresh foe. Horse met horse, sabers flashed, right almost as pardoned if the rival commands were in a death-grapple.

They surged from side to side. The guard had met a foe better prepared for work than the infantry, and for awhile the result was in doubt, but surely the Confederates were pushed back.

Zagonyi afterward said that he had seen charges, but never one like that. So, too, an admirer might almost be pardoned if he said that never before did young soldiers fight as then. Their blows were crushing, and even in the heat of battle, they remembered the major's teaching.

Steadily they cut a red road in the Confederate ranks, until the latter must have thought them demons; and before that destructive pressure, the cavalry lost heart, as the infantry had done, recoiled, abandoned themselves to confusion, and fled.

They were sharply followed. The infantry had been allowed to go where they pleased, but against the troopers the guard hurled themselves persistently, resolved not to leave enough to make another stand.

Their work was well done.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE CAPTURED TOWN.

When the guard struck the cavalry, Sergeant Barlow was on the right flank. He looked at Sharpshot, who had heretofore been near him, but said nothing. The soldier. One moment he wondered what had become of him, and then the shock came.

As the battle raged, Max frequently glanced over his shoulder to see what was going, and in this way his attention became fixed for a moment upon one of the Confederates who was dashing about and wielding a saber with perfect fury.

There was something so bold and eccentric in the movements of the man, so out of order with all the rules of service, that Barlow could not but look repeatedly.

As the line the man dashed again and again, dashing and slashing, but seldom pausing to follow them up, and really doing little damage, while, ever and anon, he uttered a discordant screech which may or may not have been a battle cry.

Barlow was unable to understand it. Gradually, it dawned upon him that there was something familiar about the man. Face, form and manner, seemed like some echo from the past—where had he seen him before?

Had he remembered him at last; the strange horseman was Yeaton, the madman

he had fought in the secret room of the mansion near the Osage.

He had barely made this discovery when the surge of the fight brought them near each other. Then, something drew Yenton's gaze to him and his eyes flashed with the old, mad light.

"Ha! ha!" he laughed, wildly, "so I have you again! I've been hunting for you many a day. I've found you at last, and I'll make you a dead man inside of three seconds. Take that!"

He accompanied the last word with a vicious blow of his sabre, but Barlow easily parried it, and gave back blow for blow. Their sabres clashed, and though the maniac showed little of the rare skill he had shown in their former encounter, the contest waxed hot.

Yenton's horse was a fiery, mettlesome charger, ill-suited for the business, and many strokes were thus thrown away, but the affair had a decidedly business-like air.

Barlow, however, remembered that this man was insane, and the father of one to whom he already owed a great debt of gratitude.

"Mr. Yenton," he said, "this is no place for a fight. I implore you, retire to the rear, and not risk your life in a useless fight. Where is your son?"

"What is that to you?" was the fierce reply. "What is that to me? When sons turn against their fathers it is time for a fight. Ha! dog in Union blue, I doubt not, but that you have a father somewhere, loaded down with chains. My curse on the age!"

"Will you go back?" repeated Barlow. "Is it worth the value? Go, and save it while you can!"

"Ha! ha! you fear me, dog, you fear me. Good! I'll soon show you what the old man can do. I'll show you!"

Barlow, armed with hot words and better blows, but even while his sabre was raised for a stroke he suddenly paused, dropped the weapon, swayed in the saddle and then went headlong to the ground.

Barlow looked down and saw a red stream flowing over his head, and then he realized that a chance shot, fired by his own friends, had entered his head and ended his career forever.

He had died fighting for the Confederate cause he loved so well.

Barlow had no time to look for his remains. The surge of battle bore him away, and when, a little later, the foe fled, he had other thoughts on his mind.

The guard held the ground as victors. Of the enemy, horse and foot, had taken flight—the two thousand had been dispersed by the hundred and fifty.

But where were the hundred and fifty? The remnant of the guard at that moment gathered around Zagoni, but did not count more than half that number. The other half lay dead or wounded along the line which stretched from the beginning of the lane to the place of final victory.

The battle had been won—gloriously won, but it seemed as though at a fearful cost. Only one half left! Seventy brave men dead or dying—but the loss might not be so severe after all. Others might yet be found alive.

Zagoni looked at his braves in mingled joy and sadness. A great triumph had been achieved, but many a face was absent at that moment. Chamberlain, Becker, Schneider, Morrison, Vanway—where were they?

Zagoni could hardly find words to address the survivors, but he managed to express his sentiments, and the guard showed that they were still with him in thought, word and deed.

They were covered with blood and smoke, their blue uniforms were wet and soiled, but on their warrior faces was the old, brave look which had been before the grand charge.

Where in the history of our country is there anything that goes before that day's work?

Against overwhelming odds they had won a fight which, when flashed along the wires to the North, thrilled every patriot's heart with joy and pride.

Fremont's body-guard had proved its right to be called war soldiers; more, they had proved their right to be called heroes.

Zagoni formed the remnant and set their faces toward the town. It was practically captured; he felt sure no armed resistance would meet them there, and he knew that many Union people would hail their arrival with joy.

Sergeant Barlow was not among those

who formed for the advance. Where, then, was he?

A little before, when they were pursuing the fleeing cavalry, a horseman had dashed to his side and, through the stains of battle, he recognized Sharpshot.

"Quick! This way, Max!" said the scout, hastily. "I've seen the whole crew, and I've seen the girls. Keeler and Sam Stiles are carrying them off. Quick, I say, and we will save them yet!"

Barlow needed no second bidding. He forgot then that he might be neglecting his official duty, forgot that he except the fact that the woman he loved was in peril, and, brave soldier though he was, his heart was as tender as that of a woman.

Few truly brave men are otherwise. Many do yield to the tender passion, but even they respect and admire the sex that refines and elevates them.

Away went the two. Max and the scout, and as they rode, the latter explained what he knew.

Keeler had been with the infantry, accompanied by his men, but they had been curiously treated by the Confederate leader and obliged to keep at the rear. Thus, the guerrillas were out of the danger, but he had at first been tempted to disregard orders and sweep down on the guard.

When, however, he saw the Confederate force go to pieces, he realized that the day was lost, and he at once made arrangements for leaving Springfield the following night, taking Olive and Lena with them, but he had not had an idea that the guard would find the way.

Seeing that it was so to be, he sent two men to take the girls from the house and move away on the safest road, and after a little delay, he and Stiles set out to join them.

Thus it was that Sharpshot, while scouting, chanced to see the girls in company with Keeler, Stiles and the other two men. They were leaving town by the Osceola road, and Sharpshot knew that only quick work would prevent the guerrillas from getting them more completely in his power.

So across the field went the pursuers, heading straight for the Osceola road, and their gallant horses, jaded as they were, covered the ground in fine style.

It did not take them long to reach the road, and then, a mile ahead, they saw the party they were seeking. Keeler had sent his band by another route, intending to cage his prisoners and join his men afterward, but he had not had time to do this with his unwilling lady companions.

"We've got 'em sure," said Sharpshot, exultantly.

"I'm not so sure of that."

"We're not?"

"Our horses are jaded by a fifty mile march, and a hard fight, while theirs are probably fresh."

"But our stock is better nor their'n, or it should be. They ain't many horses in Missouri ekul ter the guard's, an' our'n are among the best."

"Keeler's men rode good stock the night they chased us across the Osage, and they should have the same among the Ozark Mountains."

"Mebbe you are right, sergeant, but we will soon see."

They were speeding rapidly along the Osceola road, watching the cloud of dust ahead which betrayed the position of the women-stealers, and their own horses were going nobly. Their speed was something to wonder at, after all they had endured. "That ain't many horses," said, there was no better stock in Missouri.

During the first mile of the chase there was no perceptible change in their relative positions, but Barlow, seeing they did not gain ground, grew impatient. "The pursued could not bring their own for awhile," he thought, "the Unionists must surely give way."

Sharpshot, too, seemed to see the danger, but it only served to put his wits to work.

"Sergeant," he said, "I've got an idea."

"What is it?"

"The road bends above byar, as you know, an' if they stick to it, why can't I make a dash through the woods in a straight line an' head 'em off?"

"Sure enough; I did not think of that. We will both go."

"No."

"The varmints know they are pursued, an', o' course, are watchin' us. Ef we both disappear, they will suspect the truth, an', turnin' off somehow, easily get out o' our way."

"You are right, there, but, even if you get ahead of them, what can you do? They are four; you, but one."

"We took bigger odds when the guard charged. Don't you fear for me, sergeant. You know I kin sling lead some, but you don't know how much. Let me at them pison varmints, an' I'll make 'em bow!"

"Have your way," said Barlow, "but, I implore you, do not let me down. Your life is too valuable to be thrown away."

Your hand, Sharpshot!"

They crossed palms, riding at a gallop, looked steadily into each other's eyes; then a small circle on the face of the sharpshooter.

"Hyar we part," he said, "but we shall meet again. Don't get the blues on my account. I've come through many a close rub, an' I'm good for more. Good-day!"

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### A DESPERATE DUEL.

With the last word, the scout dropped Barlow's hand, and turned toward the bushes. He urged his horse from the road, as fast touched the leaves and dry sticks of the woods, and in the face of the sharpshooter.

He waved a farewell—then he was gone.

Barlow looked after him with very friendly eyes.

"Brave fellow!" he muttered, "nothing is too rich for him to dare. I don't know what will come of this latest venture, but it almost seems as though he bears a charmed life. Oh! why can't I ride down those fellows in front?"

He turned on his horse with a guilty feeling, for he knew the noble animal was already doing all that could justly be asked of it; but horseflesh must not stand in the way of this latest adventure.

He watched the mould of dust closely, fearful that the guerrillas would in some way slip out of his fingers, but never pausing to reflect that, if they turned at bay, they would be four to one against him.

What significance had when a soldier rides to aid the woman he loves?

And Sharpshot—what of him?

He had quickly disappeared from Barlow's sight and hearing, but he was working manfully. He had cut his way through the wood, way was all through the wood which, though for the most part open, now and then dropped a bunch in his path which compelled him to bend low to avoid a collision.

He had set his mind on cutting off the guerrillas, and we have already seen that he was a man of resolution. When he left Max, it was with the expectation that he would have to encounter the whole four of the enemy, and if it came to this he would not be particular about the way he dealt with them.

No outlaws of our country, before or since the war, were more lawless than Keeler's band had been. As we have before said, he had the reputation of being the baddest of the Southern Confederacy, in his men he was cordially feared and detested by all classes in the Ozark region.

For a long while he had plundered indiscriminately, but the Confederate generals had finally shown him such positive warning that he ceased to openly annoy the sympathizers with the cause, though he still remained a robber.

Against such a man any hostile act would be fair, while the men at this time with him, Sam Stiles was as bad as he, and the other two showed their material by the company they kept.

For half an hour Sharpshot rode at full speed, and without pausing, looked carefully to his weapons. He was nearing the Osceola road, and, unless the kidnappers had gone faster than he thought, an encounter would soon come.

He rode up the traveled way, and stopped his tired horse.

The road lay white and dusty before him, hemmed in by trees; but, as far as he could see, no other person was visible. He leaped from his saddle and looked at the ground.

No fresh tracks were visible, and he knew the guerrillas had not passed.

Looking along the road, in the direction of Springfield, he saw a single horseman approaching. On a look at the man, he knew him that it was not one of Keeler's men. The unknown wore citizen's garments, and was riding along leisurely; his air was not that of a fugitive.

Sharpshot looked at him keenly. He would have taken to cover for him to pass, but the attention of the stranger was already upon him, and he stood still.

A little later the scout started slightly. He



had recognized the man; he was the younger Yeaton, who had already done so much for the cause of one of our friends.

He reached where Sharpshot stood, and the recognition was mutual. The scout nodded.

"Evenin', Mr. Yeaton, evenin'," he finally said. "Out for an airin'?"

"Out for my health," answered the Confederate, grimly; "out of Springfield, I mean. Zagonny and the guard have made it too hot for me over here of the gray."

Sharpshot smiled, and then grew grave. "I'm glad ter see you, partner, fur I have somethin' ter say. Are you in a hurry?"

"No. Let me talk ter you a bit."

The scout rode nearer, and began speaking rapidly and earnestly. What he said will be told in due time; suffice it to say, for now, that he held the attention of the Confederate to the end; and when he had finished, Yeaton held out his hand frankly.

"You can count on me; I am with you," he earnestly said.

Then, with clasped hands, when looking down the road, Sharpshot saw Keeler and his prisoners approaching. All were there, the two girls and the four captors, and the scout's face grew stern and set.

"Either I win now, against odds, or die with my face to the foe," he said.

"It is a great risk," began Yeaton.

"I will have it so," was the firm answer.

"I beg of you, do not interfere."

The guerrillas and their prisoners approached. Sharpshot and Yeaton sat on their horses in their path.

Sharpshot had seemed inclined to remain silent, but now he spoke.

"Wait a moment, Captain Keeler," he said, "I have a word to say to you."

"Be quick, then," was the gruff reply.

"I'm in haste."

"So I see. Women stealers usually are in a hurry."

"What do you mean?"

"Simply that I know you and your prisoners, and that I am here as your enemy. If you go on, outlaw, you must fight your way."

"I reckon we can do that," Keeler answered, with a sneer. "I see no formidable obstacle. But who are you that gets in my way so rashly?"

"I am a man you hung in the wood near the Osage."

"The devil!" ejaculated the guerrilla.

He had previously learned that the attempted execution had been a failure, and remembered him well. So homely a man as the spy was not easily forgotten.

"You attempted to hang me that night and failed. Now, I am here to square the account, and to take your prisoners away."

Keeler laughed.

"You have assurance enough, at anyrate. Do you see that we are four against two?"

"I am willing to take the greater odds. Listen to my proposition: I am a man of deeds, not of words, as I will convince you; so I make this offer: I will fight three of you on horse back, our weapons to be revolvers; and you shall release the other two."

"I will release and leave your prisoners in charge of your fourth man; then the other three shall stand toward me. I will meet you half way, and then let our quarrel be settled by bullets. What do you say?"

"It is an idea which Keeler, as a fugitive, shun," have rejected, as a far quicker way would have been to force the fighting as they were then; but, villain though he was, he was a brave man, and was forcibly impressed by the proposition.

He turned to Sam Stiles, who was looking on, and held a brief consultation.

Meanwhile, Sharpshot looked at the girls, who were too young to be taken to what was being said. He met their gaze, and it seemed to nerve him for the great effort. Better that he leave his body in the road than that they remain captives of these lawless men.

They were turned abruptly to the sharpshooter.

"We accept your proposition," he said.

"Then let each party retire until we have a hundred yards apart. At that distance we will draw each other and fire as we see fit. But, I warn you do not try to bring your muskets. I will not brook any treachery."

"Rest easy," said the guerrilla, haughtily.

"We are not afraid to fight as we have agreed."

Both parties retreated until a hundred yards lay between them. Yeaton spoke

earnestly to Sharpshot. The latter remained as cool as ever. He was going to risk his life against odds, but it was not in his nature to feel any fear.

Keeler gave the signal, and the deadly enemies swept toward each other at a gallop. Sharpshot held a revolver in each hand, while in his belt were two more, the property of Yeaton.

The latter watched anxiously. It was a strange fact, but only one of the peculiarities of war, that all his sympathy was with the single man and against those who were the gray of the cause he loved so well.

And the charging men the dust rolled up, but did not conceal their movements. He saw Sharpshot sitting boldly in his saddle, and scarcely breathed as he looked for the next move in the game.

The scout had said that his revolvers would carry much further than an ordinary weapon of the kind; why did he not use them before it was too late?

Had a crack, a puff of smoke, and down goes the unnamed rider of the guerrilla train. Sharpshot has selected the lesser villain of the three for his first victim and struck well. The man does not arise, and is plainly out of the affair.

Then the fight begins in earnest. The ice broken, Keeler and Stiles begin a rapid fusillade, and the revolvers make warlike music.

At first there is little danger for the bold scout, for the distance is too great for any but such marksmen as he; but every bound of the horses takes them nearer together, and Yeaton holds his breath.

Sharpshot wastes no lead. He is a man of strange coolness; he knows its value, and knows, too, that he is a dead shot.

He lets the lead whistle past his head, daring death, until such time as he is sure of his next victim.

Now the advantage the fight will soon be decided, probably before they close; but he realizes that, in the foolish way the guerrillas are firing, the only danger is from a chance shot.

At last he pulls the trigger again. His hand is steady, his aim sure, and at the crack, Keeler reels in his saddle, clutches blindly at the air and falls to the ground.

One foot glances at the stirrup, and the right arm, starting, drags him a few yards before he falls free.

By that time more work has been done. Sharpshot, with only one foe before him, dashes straight at the other.

They are close now. They are very near each other, at last, and Stiles raises his revolver for a sure, steady shot. He is disturbed by the fall of his companions, and he realizes that he is in peril, but he does not let all his power go; so he covers the heart of the Union scout.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### CONCLUSION.

Sharpshot saw his danger and was equal to the emergency. He had one of those rare natures which enable a man to remain as cool in the hour of battle as in times of peace, and his hand had not forgot its cunning.

Just as Sam Stiles was about to pull the trigger, the scout's revolver spoke for the third time.

Stiles aimed the shot had been, for, as it rang out, the guerrilla's own revolver fell to the ground, and his arm fell helplessly to his side.

Another moment and Sharpshot was beside him, and the deadly revolver was pressing against his temple.

"Surrender!" cried the scout, in a thrilling voice. "Yield, as you hope for your life."

"I am a scout," said Stiles, surlily, but with praiseworthy coolness. "My arm is broken short off."

"So it seems; but you have a left hand and other revolvers in your belt. I'll relieve you of them before you do harm."

He suited the action to the word, and Stiles sat before him a helpless prisoner, while Yeaton galloped rapidly toward the spot.

Then a shout sounded from down the road, and they looked to see the fourth guerrilla fleeing before the rush of Max Barlow.

A revolver cracked, and the man went to the ground. The guerrilla was cleared off the scene.

Barlow paused before Olive and Lena, but Sharpshot, his face still stern, turned to Yeaton.

"Will you watch this man while I take a look at Keeler?" he asked.

"Certainly. Go ahead."

Sharpshot went, but the chief was beyond knowing him. He was still breathing, but consciousness had forever fled. Seeing this, the scout turned away.

Barlow, Olive and Lena had advanced to the side of Stiles and Yeaton, and the sergeant was taking the noble Confederate by the hand. The girls looked on, joy in their faces, and the color gradually creeping back to their cheeks.

Sharpshot joined them.

"Ain't you got airy a welcome far me?" he asked, with assumed anger.

"Do you think we could welcome such a looking object?" demanded Barlow, laughing. "You ought to look at yourself in a glass."

"Your face is as striped as a zebra's, and your red wig is on awry. My good fellow, you may as well cast off your disguise, now."

Max spoke in a happy way, and Yeaton, who had been looking closely, suddenly started.

"By my life!" he said, "I believe that I, too, know you. Has the grave given up its dead? Are you Edgar Petersen?"

"I don't know that the grave has any share in the work, but I am Edgar Petersen!"

With these words, Sharpshot cast off his false beard and his wig, rubbed away a good deal of the brown stain on his face—which had become streaked through abundant perspiration—and stood before them very much like the Edgar Petersen of the old days, only more erect and manly.

Barlow caught his hand warmly.

"Twenty-four hours ago this would have amazed me, but now I am not surprised," he said.

"When did you first suspect?"

"Just before the guard made their charge. You forgot yourself then, in your intensity, and spoke in your natural voice. I was sure it was you, but I kept my peace and resolved to wait until the proper time."

"I knew you suspected me then, but as I was about to throw off the mask, cared nothing for it."

"What in the world induced you to adopt such a role?"

"To hide myself," said Petersen. "It is easy to tell you why. You know that I used to be a miserably drunken drunkard, and to be a miserably aroused the manhood within me."

"It was the beginning of war—and other things."

He glanced at Lena, whose fair face was full of joy, and Barlow nodded quickly.

"I understand all that," he said.

"When I swore never again to touch liquor, and to do my utmost for the Union, I continued Edgar. It occurred to me that I ought to prove my sincerity before asking others to trust me."

Sharpshot, the sharpshooter was the outgrowth of that idea. I assumed the disguise, telling only one person of my resolve."

He glanced again at Lena, and she smiled back into his face.

"I was in every way fitted for the character I assumed. I was a fine marksman, a good trailer, and a good scout."

Barlow, who had put on a wig, a false beard, and stained my face with berry-juice, and even Lena did not at first recognize me. I sought action and found it, first under General Lyon, at Boonville; next, I was with Sigel, at Neosho, where I met you, and, afterward, at Wilson's Creek. At these places I did my best for the Union cause, and, in this way, obtaining the favor of the generals, I was able to obtain a commission as a private in the Union army."

He turned to Keeler, and she smiled back into his face.

"All was not clear sailing, however. I had an enemy in the person of Sam Stiles, who, I may as well explain, aspired to win Lena Somers for his wife. Before your eyes, Barlow, marched to join Sigel, Stiles went to Keeler and the latter wrote a letter betraying your plans. This letter was intended to ruin me, as Keeler imitated my writing wonderfully well."

"Now, I come to the lynching affair. Stiles was resolved to have my life, and, still being in your way, he kept on all the time."

"I was hung by the neck; but just then, a dash of Keeler's guerrillas, drove away the lynchers—an accident on their part which Keeler and Stiles afterward soundly cursed."

"I was near my death then, but at the critical moment, Lena appeared and cut me down. She brought me back to consciousness, and then I made her tell all that she had heard of me."

"From that time, as Petersen should be as one dead to all but her until the scout, Sharpshot, had proved himself a man."

"So I made her promise to remain silent, even to Olive, and to keep her word while I went on as Sharpshot. You, Barlow, and others, were much perplexed by my disappearance, but I was usually near you, and

my disguise was so perfect that, with my changed voice and a peculiar twist I gave my countenance, you did not recognize me."

"You remember I asked you several times where we had met before," said Max.

"So you did," answered Edgar, laughing, "but you could not penetrate the disguise. Now, as you already know that it was Keeler and Stiles who tried to kill you in St. Louis, and that the mysterious letter you received was written by Mr. Yeaton, as true a man as ever lived, I will pass on to the ghost you saw in the wood."

"Keeler, like the suspecting that I was Edgar Peterson, tried to hang me as a spy, but I escaped through the aid of a Union man who was masquerading in the band. The affair, however, displaced my wig and beard, and I went into a glade to arrange them. At that moment you came up and saw what you thought was the ghost of Edgar Peterson, and, having discovered you, in turn, I made certain gestures to heighten the impression, and then vanished as soon as the moon clouded."

"But you were terribly pale."

"All your fancy, my dear fellow, for you know ghosts ought to be pale. Very likely, too, the moonlight had something to do with it; and the hanging all may have taken away some color, even as my rough experience had washed away a good deal of the Sharpshot stain."

"But, you rascal, you told me you believed in ghosts, and had seen them," said Barlow, in assumed anger.

"I took delight in bothering you," said Edgar, laughing lightly; then, growing serious: "now, Max, you know who Sharpshot is, and I ask, you fairly, have I proved my right to be called a man?"

"You have, nobly and fully," said Barlow.

"I have not touched a drop of liquor for five months, and I never shall again. After this expedition is over, I shall cast aside my

role of the sharpshooter and apply for service in my real character. I hope to make my name honored!"

"Heaven grant that you may!" added Yeaton.

Not much longer did they stay in the wood. They bade farewell to Yeaton, and, with Stiles as a prisoner, set out on their return to Springfield.

When Barlow left the guard, he believed the fighting was over, but some of the Confederates still showing a bold front, they were assailed, driven back into the town, fought in the streets and finally utterly routed.

Zagonyi had won the place, and the Unionists came out to hail them as deliverers. Men cheered, and women waved their handkerchiefs—all were glad to see the men who had made so grand a charge.

When Barlow, Edgar, and the two sisters arrived, they found a scene of rejoicing, while none were happier than Olive and Lena.

There, we will leave them. Many pages more might be written of the subsequent adventures of Max and Edgar, but with the triumph of the latter, our story may well come to a close.

Soon after, Springfield was occupied by Fremont's army, Olive and Lena were sent under a safe escort to St. Louis, where they remained to the end of the war. Their father, too, was with them, for, after his recovery, he had no desire to live on the contested ground.

Barlow and Peterson served faithfully to the end of the great war and both won renown. No reproach ever fell on the record of the latter after he had nobly cleared his name; and when, the struggle ended, he returned to St. Louis, it was to meet the undying love of Lena.

We need scarcely add that they then united their fortunes for life, or that, at

the same time, Olive became the bride of Max Barlow.

Sam Stiles made a full confession, laughingly in prison, was exchanged; and then, in his first fight, received a wound of which he died, a week later.

Yeaton served the cause he loved to the end of the war, and if he was in the wrong, he believed himself right. He was a noble fellow, and his Union friends were glad to know, in the peace that followed the war, that he was on the old plantation, and a happy man.

Of General Fremont, Major Zagonyi and the guard, much more might be written, but they are characters of history, and there their adventures properly belong.

The guard had lost heavily at Springfield, but when the wounded had recovered, and the prisoners began to regain the actual loss, in dead, was but seventeen, and that, too, in a charge against such overwhelming odds.

Turn where the reader will in the pages of history, nothing more grand than that day's work can be found. The charge they made will live in memory for many years to come, and let the generations that live in the future, give all honor to those noble men, the "guard of Antietam."

And let no one forget Zagonyi, the hero of two continents, the brave Hungarian who unsheathed his sword for our Union, for to him belongs honor and unbounded respect.

Brave General Fremont, whom men call the "Pathfinder"—what of him? The man who crossed the heart of the continent, who climbed the Rocky Mountains through ice and snow, for his country's good; and who afterward stood so firmly for the same cause when the Union was menaced—be ours, to honor and admire, while the nation lives.

And so we leave them all, for our story is told, adding, only, that we wish all happiness and honor to those who were in various ways connected with the guard.

## THE END.

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